

THE OLD
MOUNTAIN
HERMIT



JAMES F. RAYMOND

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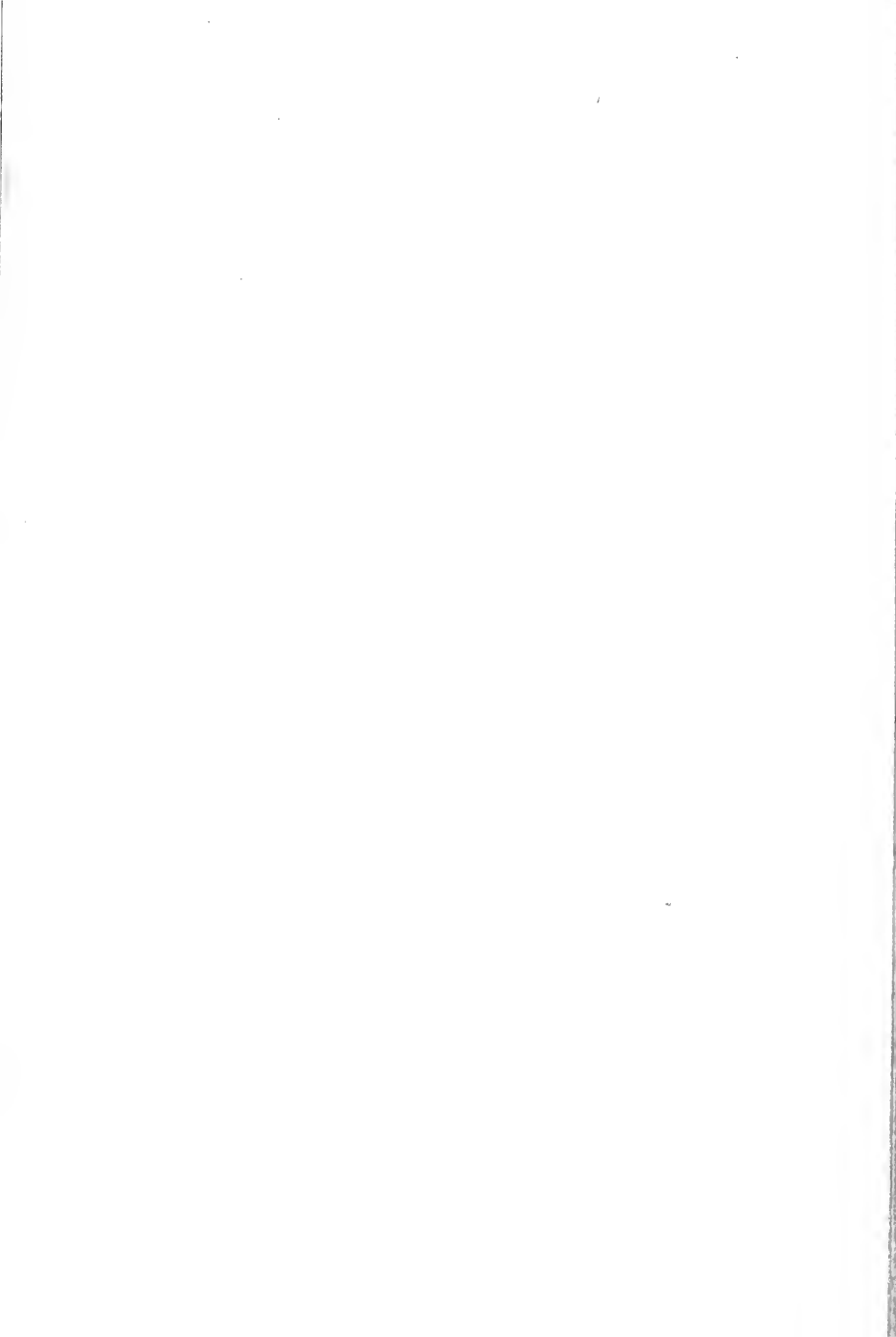
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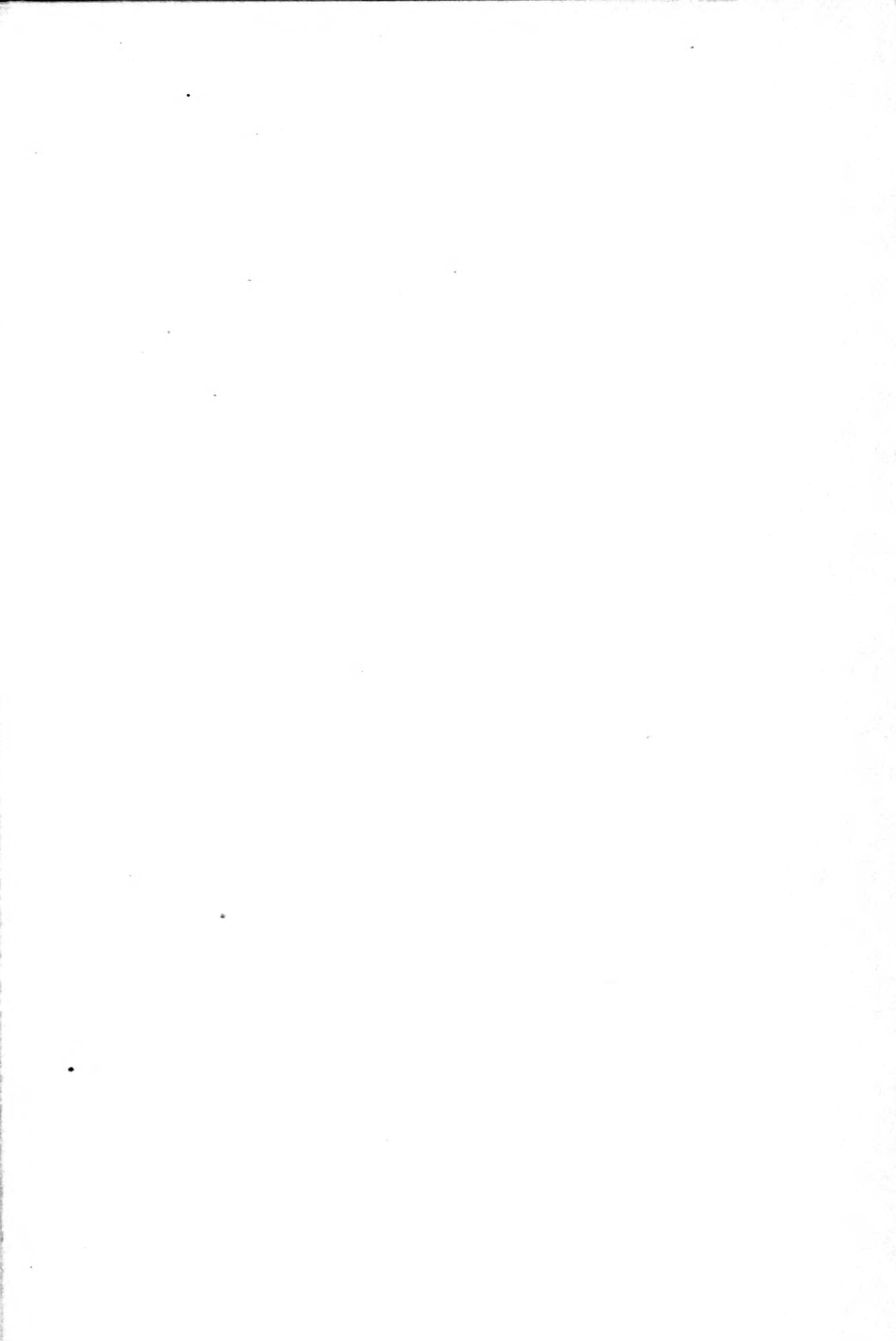
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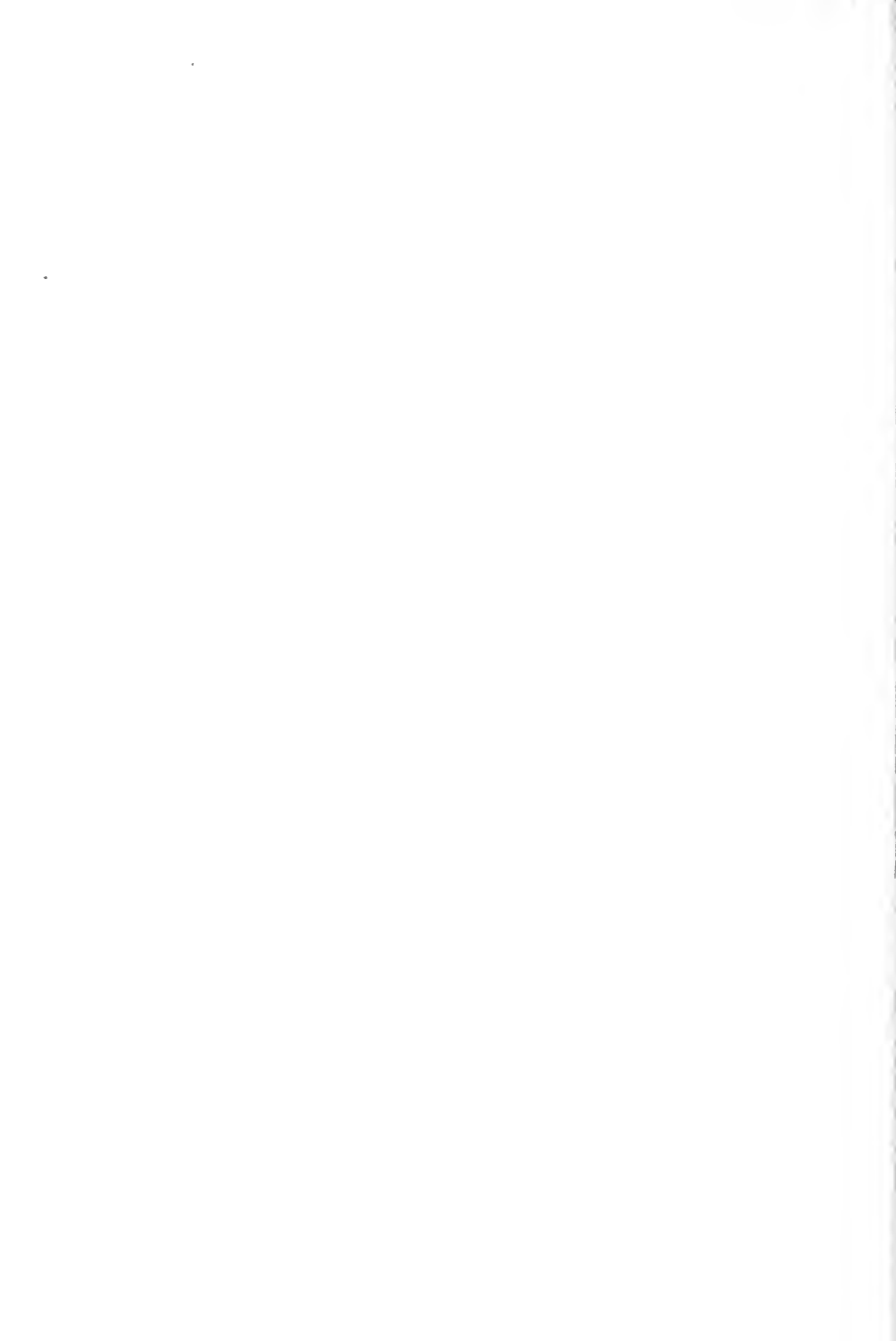


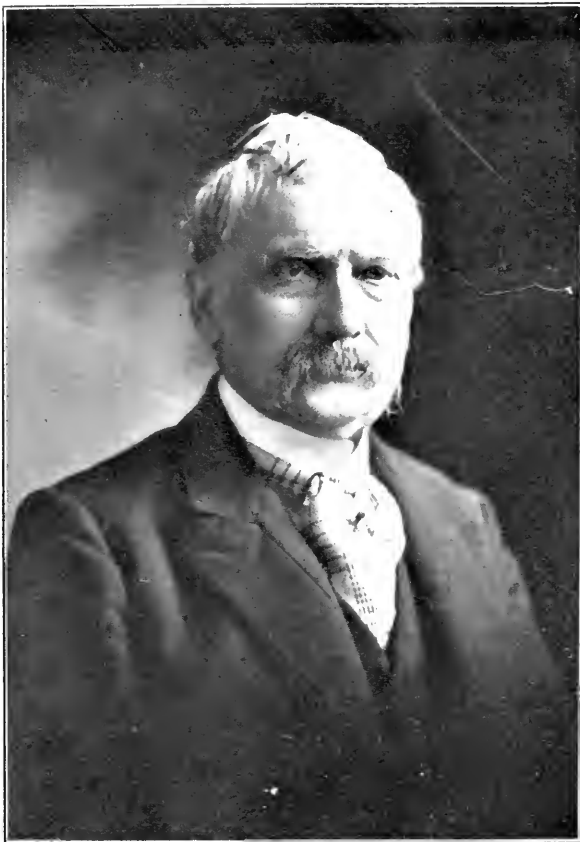












JAMES F. RAYMOND.

The Old Mountain Hermit

By
James F. Raymond



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THE OLD MOUNTAIN HERMIT

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

JOE AND THE COLONEL.

Now be it known in explanation, relative to the relations existing between Colonel Ashburton and myself,—for we were friends of long standing,—he an officer in the British Army, I a young lawyer, peradventure not an overly good one, but, be this as it may, had taken an office, nailed over the outer door a sheet of tin whereon in golden letters was inscribed, “Joseph Lindley, attorney and counsellor at law,” resolved to do or die in the attempt. Indeed, I had no alternative, for with me it was one of those cases where a fellow may swim if he can, sink if he must. At the same time I felt fairly well assured that if I could only get a foothold the chances were largely in favor of the former. But before setting down to work—not particularly tedious at the outset, as I was fain to believe, for I had not only a name to make but clients to secure as well, the one a necessary adjunct of the other—I thought to take a day off, journeying to a neighboring town, ostensibly to visit relatives,

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really to see a young lady to whom I hoped, on this especial occasion, to become engaged, ultimately making her my wife.

Having fulfilled my mission, with attending results all that I could have anticipated, or even desired, I had, on this morning, returned fully prepared for business, but finding my friend—the Colonel—the hero of the hour, resolved to make him a visit, the interview terminating as will ere long be disclosed.

Cigars lighted, an injunction relative to the disposition of my pedal extremities complied with, the Colonel, after a few moments' reflection, said:

“You will doubtless remember, Joe, that away back in the seventies the regiment I have the honor of commanding was ordered to the East Indies for the purpose, as at the time alleged, of looking after an outbreak by the natives.

“Arrangements made, arms, ammunition and provisions on board, farewells spoken—tearful in many instances, for the boys were leaving their sweethearts behind—the regiment embarked, soon thereafter setting sail. The voyage was tiresome in the extreme, for India, Joe, is a long distance away.

“Disembarking, the line of march was at once taken up, but on **reaching** the point in question we found nothing **to do**, the insurrection, or whatever name it **went by**, having been put down, and as the natives **now** seemed peaceably inclined, the little army was established both for occupation and observation, though in regard to the **former** we certainly had little enough to occupy **our** attention; as to the latter, our observation was

limited to the one who held the best hand in *écarté*, *euchre* or seven up, but it was not a great while before I was raised to the rank of captain, thence through successive gradations, to that of colonel. It all coming about from a little matter of duty by way of assisting to capture a lawless gang of freebooters, a holy terror to the whole country thereabout, but notwithstanding this, I was at the time inclined to the belief that yellow fever was a notable adjunct of my rapid promotion—providential dispensation, some were wont to affirm.

“But to return: remaining in camp for a considerable time, nothing out of the common run transpiring to engage our attention, for you must know that soldier life is monotonous enough at the best, the days constantly becoming more wearisome, the heat increasing in like ratio, so, in order to effect some change having a more agreeable tendency, thereby contributing to the relief of my downcast spirits, I proposed to my servant, Yoseph, that we take a day off for hunting.

“This Yoseph of whom I speak, was not only a native, but, as I was credibly informed, a huntsman of no mean reputation, and withal a good companion, for he had been the recipient of fortune’s favors, in so far at least as concerned a fair education, and was, therefore, much better informed than most of those in similar condition. Not only this, but he was said to have a tinge of royal blood in his veins; so, taken altogether, as a servant and companion, he was all that could be desired.

“On a morning, just as the sun was climbing up from beyond a distant mountain range, we set out,

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a pack of well-trained hounds accompanying us, yelping their delight at what promised a fine day's sport.

"The day passed, nothing of special note occurring to mar the pleasure, on the contrary, everything in its favor, for we not only found game in plenty, but filled our bags to repletion. So along toward sunset we turned back on the homeward route.

"The day had been uncommonly fine, the heated atmosphere tempered by the sea breeze, along the shore of which our course mostly led, and we were, as might be expected, in exuberant spirits.

"About five o'clock, while riding leisurely along, the hounds, finding nothing better to do, were constantly running their noses into all sorts of out-of-the-way places in effort to stir up some unsuspecting quarry, when all of a sudden there arose a terrible commotion mingled with cries of anger and howls of pain, the tumult evidently arising from a densely massed thicket on our left.

"'Aha! my brave hounds, you've doubtless stirred up more than you bargained for,' an inference a little later confirmed by the appearance of a huge Bengal tiger, who, springing from out the thicket, fastened himself to the flank of Selim, thence forward in the direction of your humble servant, who, no less frightened than his trembling steed, was engaged in looking for a place of safety but with little prospect of success; and, Joe, I can truthfully assert, that while I have faced many a frowning battery, never in my whole life did I consider myself in so great danger as at that precise moment, nor do I think it detracting from

one's courage to admit that I was never before so thoroughly frightened.

"At this juncture, Yoseph, cool and collected, as was his usual wont, flung himself on the blood-thirsty beast, receiving in return a crushed arm; for the brute without so much 'as by your leave,' turned on his aggressor and grasped his right arm, and the life of my devoted friend wouldn't have been worth a penny dip had not a well-aimed shot from my Winchester laid the monster lifeless at Selim's feet.

"I now found myself in a peculiarly unwelcome predicament, for we were a long distance from camp, and how to transport my dangerously wounded companion was a difficult matter to decide. However, on the principle that where there is a will the way can, in almost every instance, be found, I adopted the latter by fixing on the saddle a pair of thick woollen blankets, and then strapped Yoseph to the saddle-bow; for you see, Joe, the flow of blood had so weakened his usually strong frame that it was hard to maintain an upright position, but, notwithstanding all these difficulties, midnight saw us safely in camp, Yoseph placed in care of a surgeon, while as to myself, I was so exhausted I was only too glad to welcome my bed.

"Three long, tedious months did I keep watch and ward at my suffering comrade's bedside, ministering to his wants in every possible way, striving to alleviate his fearful sufferings, enhanced, as they necessarily must be, from the furious heat, until at length his wounds were healed and his arm saved.

"On an uncommonly hot afternoon, Yoseph slumbering in his hammock, as I supposed, while I

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lazily reclined in an easy chair turning the pages of a lately published novel—reading was out of the question—Yoseph, who, as I shortly afterward discovered, was not sleeping, but simply cogitating, abruptly broke the silence and my reverie by saying: ‘Master, you have been uncommonly good to your poor servant, day after day sitting by his couch, even to the neglecting of your own interests for his welfare. Moreover, by the help of Allah, you have not only saved this good right arm, but his life as well. How, good master, can I recompense you, for surely such devotion ought not to go unrewarded?’

CHAPTER II.

YOSEPH REPAYS HIS MASTER.

“HEARKEN closely to what I am about to say, master, for it is something I am persuaded you will be pleased to hear. Know then, that eighteen months or more since, in company with three comrades I was traveling in a remote portion of the kingdom, when on an afternoon an hour or so before sunset, a roebuck sprang up at our feet and made his way across the plain apparently seeking shelter in the midst of a distant wood.

“Taking little heed to the lateness of the hour we put spurs to our steeds, and, master, we had a long chase, and night had fallen ere the quarry was overtaken; in the meantime the sky had become overcast with dark, threatening clouds, which seemed to loom up on every side, and to which, much to our regret, we had not paid the least attention, but now, discovering the perilous situation, our minds were filled with doubt and foreboding lest we fail in securing the much needed shelter ere the storm break, which one could not fail to notice, was rapidly approaching. An enormous oak, however, was now sighted, so hurrying on we soon gained the coveted refuge, and now came a flash and report that seemed to rend the ‘heavens in twain.’ The shock was so violent that

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I was thrown to the ground, where, stunned and unconscious, I lay until the rain, falling in deluging sheets upon my exposed face, so contributed to my regaining consciousness that it was but a comparatively short space of time when I was able to sit up and look about me, but what was my consternation to behold my companions lying outstretched, who, upon examination, I found lifeless. And now to contribute to the horror of the situation, nightfall had approached, the darkness rendered thereby nearly total; moreover, and, to add to the discomfort, the rainfall was of a volume I had never before experienced.

“It was in this manner, affrighted and trembling, I remained, until I was overjoyed to find the tempest abating, when soon after the angry clouds broke, revealing a sea of blue above, around, a clear sky from out of which the moon shone with a lustre only seen in tropical latitudes; yet, look in whatsoever direction I would, not a trace of our previous route could I discern. I knew not where I was; I knew not which way to turn. Alas! I was lost in the wilds of an uninhabited, unknown region. And now came the thought, “What am I to do?”

“Summoning up a resolution that never fails me in emergency, I studied the perplexing problem until it came to me that to remain where I now was would be the wiser course. Indeed, I had no alternative, for to continue the journey by moonlight would only tend to lead me farther astray. So, unsaddling and tethering my good steed, I gave him plenty of rope that he might not go hungry for want of grass to nibble. I arranged my blankets,

placed the saddle on the ground in lieu of a better pillow, then lay down under the wide-spreading branches of the towering oak, so lately witnessing the awful fate of my poor comrades, whose lifeless bodies lay exposed to my gaze, their uncovered faces scorched and blackened by the lightning's fierce blaze, the wide-open, upturned eyes, glazed and sightless, glaring toward the heavens above. In this manner I remained the long night through; the appearance of dawn I hailed with delight.

“Rising from my hard couch I replenished my nearly extinguished fire, removed the skin from the slain roebuck, then over the live coals broiled a few slices of steak. As Selim had finished his breakfast and my own wants attended to, I stowed the remainder of the steak in my haversack, adjusted saddle and bridle, mounted, and sped in the direction I supposed would take me to the roadway previously traversed, but in this I was grievously mistaken, for on riding till near the close of the day I was almost bereft of my senses to find myself journeying in an entirely different direction to that I should have taken. Here was a dilemma indeed, and just what to do was wholly out of the range of my calculations, for I had not the least knowledge of that part of the kingdom, and the farther I advanced the more my perplexity increased, for I was thoroughly well assured that I was leaving all trace of human existence behind.

“Convinced that indecision would in no wise avail, and that hesitation might prove fatal, I resolved to continue the present course, trusting the good offices of Allah to extricate me from pending troubles, so giving Selim the rein, I pushed on

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in hope of reaching some friendly shelter ere night-fall, now swiftly advancing, should put a stop to further progress. Upon a rough estimate of the distance traversed since the early morning I concluded that a good three-score miles intervened, so spurring on, I soon after observed a dark mass sharply outlined against a background of purplish-hued sky, yet consequent on the great distance, I was unable to distinguish its character.

“Upon drawing nigh, however, I soon brought up against a gloomy, impenetrable jungle, whereupon I dismounted, picketed my weary steed, prepared supper, and afterward laid down for the night.

“You must know, good master, that I spent a considerable part of the night in warding off the wild beasts, who congregating at this particular point, were supposedly in the vicinity of water. Thus the long night spent, I resolved to test the accuracy of my speculations by striving to penetrate the jungle, thinking some pathway must perforce lead to the interior whereby the wild animals would be enabled to go back and forth in order to quench their thirst, so again mounting, I rode around the border, until at length my search was rewarded by coming on the desired opening, which I immediately entered, finding, as I hoped, a pathway, which I followed until I emerged on the shore of a small sheet of water, or, as one might say, a small lake. In the center of this lake, embowered in the midst of a profusion of tropical foliage, was a little isle. Selim, overcome with thirst and taking the bit in his teeth, plunged ahead, buried his muzzle deep down in the sparkling waters,

while I, in like mood, followed suit; and, master, never was nectar half so delicious.

“‘Now comes the query, For what purpose was yon enchanted isle created? Surely not for the dwelling place of spirits of evil, else ’twould not be so beautiful; moreover, from its extreme isolation it was quite possible human foot had never trod its lonely shore, and even were such the case, ages had likely intervened. Indeed, it was so far removed from travel, so concealed from the quest of the most indefatigable explorer that I was convinced that this little isle may have been silent witness to strange scenes. Aye! the very receptacle of prehistoric remains.

“‘Thus cogitating I resolved forthwith to make the most complete investigation possible. So, giving the word, Selim pushed boldly ahead. The waters were of such a depth as to compel the beast to take to swimming, when, soon after the shore was reached I turned my brave steed loose, then made my way through the closely woven thicket of bush, bramble and twig, finally coming upon the innermost recesses of what might with truth be termed “The Enchanted Isle”

CHAPTER III.

YOSEPH'S WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

“WHO can conceive my emotions when beholding the remarkable objects brought to view? And I cannot, even at this late day, comprehend their magnitude, for it was simply overwhelming!

“Master, you, a world-wide traveler, have looked on Allah's works; have beheld the stupendous waterfall; have experienced the storm-tossed ocean. Scanning the heavens above, have thereby sought to estimate the number and dimensions of other worlds, thus forming some little estimate of the Master's power. Yet, gainsay me not, when I do most solemnly aver that the several objects I there beheld caused all else to sink to nothingness in comparison, not so much perhaps from their magnitude, as their wondrous aspect. For here were gray ruins, hoary, moss-grown, weather-beaten and stained; exquisitely carved; in architectural design unsurpassed; fluted columns of immense size. All these and more, half buried under accumulated mold and debris of untold ages, while towering high above all were hoary monarchs of the forest, many of even larger size were lying underneath in the last stages of decay, while all things thereabout bore evidence of the most remote antiquity.

“While I mused, my every sense enthralled, my

every wish about to be gratified, my hopes even, so nearly on the eve of being realized, I gave little heed to the flight of time until recalled thereto by the neighs of Selim, who, more eager for his noonday meal than desire for exploration, made the air resound with calls for dinner. As for myself, I felt not the most remote desire for food; the pangs of hunger, did such exist, were lost in requirements of the intellect, the latter so immeasurably overshadowing the former there was hardly room for comparison.

“My one engrossing thought was, how to secure possession of these mementoes of bygone ages, for that here were relics of greater moment than any heretofore brought to light and to a world’s notice scarcely admitted of a doubt, but how to obtain them was the principal source of disquiet agitating my mind, for you must know, master, I had no implements wherewith to explore them. Indeed, the most insignificant investigation was simply out of the question. Therefore, and much to my chagrin, I was compelled to forego the attempt, so, carefully scanning the ground, thus making myself thoroughly acquainted with the locality, I turned regretfully away, called Selim to my side, bridled, saddled and mounted, again swimming the lake, reached the opposite shore, then took up the course I now knew to lead in the direction of home, and I can honestly say, in no wise sorry to have been led astray, and promising myself that at no distant day I would repeat my visit to the “Isle of the Lake” fully prepared to conduct a thorough investigation of those ancient ruins.

“There, master, you have the whole story, and

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I will only further add that from that day to this it has been a settled purpose to organize an expedition commensurate with the work in hand and make systematic exploration, but from lack of means I have been unable to carry out the contemplated scheme.'

"Springing to my feet I grasped the hand of my now doubly attached servant.

"'Yoseph, faithful friend, we will commence operations at once looking to the carrying out of your heretofore zealously guarded plans, and yet—a thought strikes me—How am I to find the locality of which you speak? for totally unacquainted as I am with that portion of the kingdom, it would be impossible to compass the desired object.'

"'Easy enough, master; easy enough,' Yoseph rejoined, 'for you see it must necessarily consume at least three days in fully organizing the expedition; for it will be necessary to gather together beasts of burden, arms, and a goodly amount of subsistence, likewise a considerable body of men, and as my wounds are quite healed, I see nothing standing in the way to prevent my accompanying the expedition, in which event, I can lead you directly to the point in question.'

"The close of the third day thereafter witnessed a spectacle inspiring to the eye and warming the heart more than mere words can express, for in compact column were a full score of camels, one-half the number of trained bullocks, and twice the number of the best disciplined and sturdy natives that could be found. On each man's shoulder a long-range Winchester, in every man's sash a pair

of the most serviceable revolvers, while hanging from a leathern belt was cutlass or sabre.

"On the morning of the fourth day the silvery note of the bugle was heard summoning the drowsy sleepers to arise, when soon after breakfast was eaten in a hurried manner, for I was in furious haste to set out on the long journey that awaited us.

"The carts loaded, camels and bullocks harnessed, and at the bugle's call the brilliant retinue filed out from the encampment, a long and doubtless tedious journey at our front. The regiment of Royal Blues, who had arisen at this early hour to witness our departure, at the rear.

"The word given and we were off, our departure hailed by cheers of comrades and hurrahs of friends and neighbors. Thus journeying, with scarcely a day's intermission for the space of forty-and-five days, the afternoon of the forty-fifth finds our column encamped on the border of the jungle discovered by Yoseph, and whereto his skillful piloting had led us. I could readily imagine the poor fellow's emotions upon being confronted by the tangled, impenetrable jungle, within whose noisome recesses lay the silent water of the lake on whose silvery bosom reposed 'the mysterious isle.'

"Ground selected suitable for camping, the carts drawn up in line, camels and bullocks unharnessed, tethered and fed; thus preparations are completed for a three days' stay, then weary, travel-stained and worn, all seek much needed rest save a half-score sentinels detailed to guard the camp, for we knew not to what perils we might be exposed.

"The night passed, all were astir in the early

morning, while Yoseph, myself and two others, rode round the outskirts of the jungle looking for an opening, when all of a sudden Yoseph in advance sang out, 'Here we are, master!' and sure enough, for here was an opening, the identical one we had been seeking.

"Entering and following a well-beaten, though narrow, pathway, we soon reach the shore of a most beautiful sheet of water, from the bosom of which rose the little isle, which confirmed Yoseph's former description, for a more entrancing scene was never vouchsafed the eye of man. And now with little urging our brave steeds pushed headlong into the lake in seeming enjoyment of the cooling bath, the waters evidently of less depth than on Yoseph's previous visit, for they now came only up to the saddle girth, so a few minutes later we deployed on the opposite bank. Hurrying to leave the saddle, we quickly stripped the horses of their trappings and allowed them to roam at will, the sandy beach offering a most tempting spot for rolling, which they were not long in taking advantage of, for this was a new experience in their lives. We next cut a broad road leading to the very center, thus bringing to view the surface of the island, where the ruins described by Yoseph were situated, and, Joe, my God! what a spectacle! Memorials of bygone ages, monuments of an era preceding the famed Deluge were there, but it was even yet scarcely suspected, much less understood, what investigation was destined to bring forth, and how much less imagined, that we were to be carried back to the very dawn of creation.

"Excavation was at once begun and pressed

with much vigor, although the work was extremely laborious, for the sand, clay and gravel were so thoroughly packed that it was almost like digging into granite. However, the work progressed in so satisfactory a manner, that just a few minutes preceding sunset our feet rested on a solid marble-like surface believed, at the time, to be the outer covering of a stone sarcophagus, which was soon after confirmed.

“Next morning I was in furious haste to get at those ancient stones. Implements were again taken in hand and piled with so much skill that a tomb was soon unearthed, bringing to light a coffin of the most extraordinary proportions, and so hermetically sealed as to require the most strenuous exertions to raise the lid. This, however, accomplished, revealed a form eleven feet, four and one-half inches in height, three feet in breadth at the shoulder. The skin of a dark brown substance, which, coming in contact with the outer air, rose in a stifling cloud of grayish dust.

“Just what my emotions were upon experiencing this startling series of events I cannot say, but that they were overwhelming I cannot deny, for, standing, as one might say, on the verge of creation, with a hand resting on one of its first completed works, was, to say the least, astounding.

“As far as exploration had advanced investigation was made, and I became more and more convinced that others of equal, possibly more importance, were at hand.

“The remains were now packed in as small space as possible, for I was determined to transport the relics by saddle, so that in no case would they be

lost sight of, though as yet not comprehending a tithe of their real worth.

“All things satisfactorily arranged, we set out on the return well pleased, as might be supposed, with the result of our labors, the only source of regret lying in the fact that I was compelled to turn back without finishing the exploration, determined in my own mind, however, to return at no distant day, better prepared for thorough investigation when machinery of power adequate to the work could be provided.

“It had by this time become in my own mind a settled conviction that the ‘Isle of the Lake’ was a vast charnel house, where were deposited remains of the most renowned characters of prehistoric times, and should such prove the case, what more probable than when unearthed and brought before the world, a sensation unparalleled in its history would be the result!

“An uncommonly singular, and to my mind surprising, circumstance, arose from the fact that while the form was as nearly perfect as it might be it was also in a remarkable state of preservation. More extended observation disclosed a recess deeply cut in one side of the coffin, from which were taken a bundle of silver plates, numbering in the aggregate forty-two, twenty inches in length, twelve in breadth, and about the thickness of ordinary letter paper.

“On either side of these plates were beautifully engraved letters of a type hitherto unknown, therefore, it immediately occurred to me, likewise a matter of speculation, as to whether the body at the time of death had been subjected to embalmment, a

process, as believed, known only to the Egyptians, yet, on further reflection, I at once became convinced that this could not be, from the fact that there was not the slightest evidence of such a course of treatment. Furthermore, these remains were evidently of a more remote date than even the Egyptian race, a fact proved beyond the possibility of doubt by finding several pieces of gold coin bearing date many centuries previous to the time of Noah, and the alleged Deluge.

“Notwithstanding these seemingly truthful evidences of a long-forgotten past, I was illy prepared for the surprise of an after-investigation, never for an instant suspecting the identity of a record going away back to the advent of the first born of the human family, yet such was the case, for here was proof positive that could not be gainsaid nor set aside.

CHAPTER IV.

COLONEL ASHBURTON'S RETURN.

"THE Royal Blues having, much to my gratification, fulfilled their 'missionary' duties in India, were ordered home, and now I was extremely anxious to get the tablets translated, for until this was done it would be impossible to place any marketable estimate on their value, nor did I anticipate any trouble in their translation, in that I felt reasonably well assured that some one of our learned lexicographers would prove equal to the task, but in this I was doomed to miserable disappointment. As an offset to this, however, a most delightful surprise was in waiting, for during my prolonged absence I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, my former rank being that of Major. But I anticipate, and to go back a little, the prospect of again meeting olden time friends and associates cheered my occasional downcast spirits on the homeward journey, for I had been absent a good twelve-month, but favoring winds in conjunction with a good head of steam wafted the 'Euphrates' swiftly on her way, hence, in due time anchor was dropped in the Thames, the great city of London at our front, India's shores thousands of miles to the rear.

"A day spent in calling on friends and former

associates, another devoted to regimental affairs, and I applied for a renewal of absence on the ground of important business, which, while granted, was not without remonstrance from my colonel, who insisted the good of the service demanded stricter attention to business than I had of late given it.

“Bidding my regimental friends adieu, I took up my travels, hasting to the most noted and trustworthy savants of the kingdom, in each instance placing the tablets in their hands for translation. But what was my consternation to find each and every one totally ignorant relative to the contents, and, in fact, after the most persistent efforts, unwearied labor, coupled in many instances with unjust, and I might say harsh, criticism, the sage philosophers were compelled to desist, vowing nothing could be made of it, one of the learned gentlemen going so far in his chagrin as to stigmatize it ‘an invention of the devil,’ finally saying, ‘I am ready to swear, good sir, it is beyond the power of mortal man to fathom the outlandish tongue,’ counselling me (all joining in the verdict) ‘that there was never a like form of speech known, other than, maybe by some prehistoric race, of which, of course, we have no knowledge, and even this savors of doubt.’

“Disheartened, but not wholly discouraged, I repacked the tablets, journeying to the farthest bounds of the kingdom, and afterward to the Continent, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, etc., but without result, for it was ever the same: ‘Nothing can be made of it.’

“As a last resort I resolved to apply where it was presumed the strange language had origin, viz.,

India, thinking Providence or some occult influence might peradventure have compassion by throwing in my way some learned native who for pecuniary consideration would be willing to lend me assistance. But now came the unwelcome thought, suppose I fail in this last supreme effort, my labors perforce come to an untoward end, yet I dare not dwell on the unwelcome possibility, for, you see, Joe, I had become so thoroughly imbued with the desire that the tablets must be deciphered, that I neither could, nor would, longer submit to deferred uncertainty; therefore, as previously stated, I would make one last desperate effort, to which end I again took up my travels, journeying to a neighboring seaport, there to learn, if possible, at what hour, day or week some vessel or other was likely to sail for India.

“On the evening of the fourth day thereafter I found myself and baggage on board the London Company’s steamship ‘Rodiques,’ just on the point of weighing anchor, preparatory to standing out to sea.

“Well, to make a long story short, as I think I’ve heard you say, seventy and five days’ continuous travel and the blue hills of India loomed at our front, thousands of leagues of old ocean spanned, and I more pleased than mere words can tell, to take leave of the one and make acquaintance with the other.

“Bidding the ship’s company ‘good-bye,’ I am pleased to inform the captain that my absence from the ship would not under any circumstances be unduly prolonged, I set out in search of some one, native or otherwise, competent to unravel the skein

of perplexity wherewith I was so completely entangled,—in other words, I wanted to find the man who could decipher the much-abused tablets; so upon faithful inquiry and diligent search, I was rewarded for both by receiving the information that many score miles distant an aged hermit resided who would no doubt come up to the requirements.

“As a first step I resolve to hunt up my old servant, Yoseph, who, I was sure, would both welcome his master and lend assistance wherever most necessary, so taking time, as usual, by the forelock, I soon after found the worthy fellow, whom, ’tis needless to say, was overjoyed on again taking the hand of his old master.

“Preparations made, and we set out on a prospectively long journey for the mountain habitation, which was many leagues distant. A rough, tortuous pathway leading thither.

“Inasmuch as I was not very well informed as to the general character of those we might chance to meet on the way, whether of human or brute, I took the precaution of enlisting in my service a half-dozen ablebodied natives, so that I felt quite well prepared for any emergency that might arise.

“It was in this manner we journeyed for the space of five days, camping at night, halting now and then by day for an hour’s rest, frequently beset by perils, lions or Bengal tigers compelling us to fight our passage over the contested ground, until at length we arrived at the foothills of a mountain range of seemingly inaccessible heights, within whose secluded depths it was said the lonely cabin of the aged pilgrim was located.

24 THE OLD MOUNTAIN HERMIT.

“Still pushing ahead, the path leading onward and upward, we emerge on a dark, gloomy defile overhung by lofty trees, environed by rocky cliffs, altogether presenting a most cheerless, unprepossessing aspect, hence it was beyond my power of calculation to conceive why any human being should choose for permanent habitation such a dreary spot !

CHAPTER V.

A STRANGE BEING.

"LABORIOUSLY making our way along, we advance up the ravine, the rocky heights on either side scarcely admitting a ray of sunlight, when all of a sudden I spy a rudely constructed log cabin.

"Leaving my horse in the care of Yoseph, with instructions to remain at the side of his companions, I dismount, then proceed to investigate, but before a half-dozen steps are taken the door of the cabin is thrown violently open, and a strange, weird figure is revealed.

"Well, thought I, if appearances count for anything, then the being standing before me must certainly have seen the light of day long ages preceding the Deluge, peradventure been silent witness to that world-wide calamity. Indeed, I would have been little surprised had the eminent ark-builder in person appeared.

"Invitation extended to enter the poor habitation. The aged relict gave me kindly greeting, extending a hand in token of friendship, at the same time welcoming me in the words, 'Sir, I feel specially gratified in thus receiving, in my humble

abode, one whom I can but know has come for some worthy object, for you must understand, good sir, the dwellers hereabout, do I so chance to appear in their midst, manifest no little alarm; but why, I know not.'

"Thus challenged, I draw from their receptacle the precious tablets and place them in his hands, whereupon, to my unbounded astonishment, and no less gratification, by a single glance, and without a moment's hesitation, he recites as from an open book. Then, raising his eyes heavenward, and taking note of the expression of my face, ludicrous enough, I'll warrant, for both physically and mentally—from the ease he deciphered a tongue hitherto setting at defiance the most noted lexicographers of the day—I was nearly paralyzed.

"Regarding me with the closest scrutiny, an expression of sadness meantime overshadowing his withered features, he lifts up his voice—some hidden emotion evidently betrayed from the broken accents: 'My friend, singular as it may appear, this is the tongue of my boyhood. In point of fact, these tablets were fashioned by mine own hand. Those bones thou hast, at the expenditure of so much treasure, secured, and by which thou holdest so much store, are mine—rather, were—but mine no longer, for what need have I of these worn-out tenements of clay, ere long to be relegated to mother earth—for hath not the Master's edict gone forth, "From the dust thou art, and unto the dust thou shalt return"? Kind sir, doth question these, mine sayings? Yea! As I plainly see, thou dost. Nevertheless, proof shall not be wanting.'

“At this startling announcement, I was so nearly overcome with awe that the weight of a feather, I do believe, would have crushed me, and as it was, I came nigh falling to the earth—and few there be, my friend, who would have been affected otherwise; nor could I as yet fully comprehend the significance of the old man’s words. However, I soon regained my physical equilibrium—but mentally I was all at sea.

“‘But who are you, sir, and by what right do you, who profess to know all things, seek thus to play on the fancies of an unsophisticated—not to say unsuspecting—stranger?’

“‘Unsuspecting, indeed! Colonel Henry Ashburton—Colonel, as thou dost claim, and no doubt rightfully—thou mayest well say, “Thou who so professest to know all things.” Say, rather, “Thou who dost know all things,” and even then thou wouldst do little justice to that to which I lay claim, neither to my acknowledged abilities and powers, as I will soon prove to thee, in this, that I was an unseen—hence, an unknown—listener to thy avowals, when thou wert in the first throes of ambition, looking to the furtherance of thy unhallowed scheme. Moreover, I was an unknown follower on thy perilous mission, a wise counsellor, standing guard, as otherwise thy bones would not be in one whit better plight than those to which thou dost lay unquestioned claim—through what might be termed “original discovery.”

“‘Forego, then, I do adjure thee, all further attempt to fathom the hidden mysteries of the “Isle of the Lake,” for thou hast already done enough and more; therefore I do beseech thee, seek not to

unearth other remains, over which unnumbered ages have silently rolled.

“Hearken unto these, my sayings, and be guided therewith, else in sackcloth and ashes thou wilt surely repent. But to that thou hast thou art welcome, and to go still further I say to thee, “Deposit my old bones wheresoever thou wilt, and no harm shall come to thee for so doing.”

“See to it, then, ye disturb not the others, else thy doom shalt be irrevocably sealed.

“One other question thou didst ask, “Who art thou?” For answer, the lone survivor of a calamity wherein the world wast adjudged to destruction—all, I repeat, save those borne up on the great Ark, besides a few the world knoweth not of, and of whom thy ancient records make no mention. Likewise, one whose destiny it is to remain ages hence.’

“And now, as on the instant, I glance upward, what do mine eyes rest upon? A scar, Joe—a veritable scar—otherwise, a seal set on his brow, from which fact I now, for the first time, began to suspect his identity.

“Joe, were you ever thrashed at school—thus led to estimate yourself the least of all created objects?—for such, I am sure, is the consideration one, under such conditions, is likely to put on himself when subjected to the humility of a flogging. Anyhow, it was so in my own case, when called upon to square accounts with the master—an art, be it said, supposed lost until about the time I came on the stage of existence; that is to say, in turn-over collar, roundabout, and bare feet.

“Allowing such to be the case, you may, in some small degree, realize my peculiar sensations—I, commander-in-chief of a regiment famed for loyalty to the Crown, noted for courage on the field of battle; in all my public acts displaying unwonted chivalry—I, Colonel Henry Ashburton, of the Royal Blues, universally known as a gallant officer, a soldier of renown, in the glory thereof maintaining an uplifting mien—at this particular moment assuming an attitude of the most abject humility, in bending the knee before a personage styling himself ‘The First Born’ of the human race.

“Indulging these not overly pleasing reflections, I am, ere long, recalled to my senses by the old hermit again lifting up his voice in the words, ‘Henry Ashburton, ye do think ye are looking on one in the flesh. Didst never hear of spiritual existence? Yea, more, spirit materialized? Yet, whether ye have or no, the form ye now behold is, of a verity, of spiritual mould; moreover, that form within which I did at one time dwell ye now have in your own keeping, and as I was the first of all flesh, so likewise shall I be the last. Didst never hear of one who slew his brother, and for which unrighteous act wert adjudged to never-ending existence? But not in the flesh; and now that so much labor has been spent, so much strength and treasure squandered, in order to lay thy hands on my old bones—’tis true, to me worthless, yet to thee peradventure of some special benefit—I will to thee a tale rehearse, but one never before told to mortal, whether in or out of the body.

“‘Cast aloft thine eyes, look on this face, and

whom do ye think ye behold? For answer, "He who slew his brother."

"Dost understand? Canst grasp the meaning? Nay, 'tis hard, I know, for the finite to comprehend the infinite. Yet 'twas not in mere wantonness the deed was done; neither was it a premeditated act. On the contrary, I was by the Master so angered that I realized not what I was doing.

"See ye not this scar? This seal set on my brow? Deeply burned thereon, lest perchance it sometime fade? Aye, I see thou dost. And 'tis a sign that, be he man or devil, none dare lift a hand against me, no beast cross my path, to do me an injury. Ah! Methinks I hear thee say, "To be thus protected would, indeed, be a blessing." On the contrary, to be thus ostracized from one's kind, the very beasts of the field shunning thy presence, from all thy fellow beings bereft of sympathy, surely this is the hardest lot ever thrust on poor humanity!

"Again, I would counsel thee in this: Whosoever sheddeth blood in mere wantonness, whether of human or brute, of such an one shall the same be required. Therefore, I do enjoin thee, that so long as thou abideth in the flesh, proclaim these mine sayings, bearing witness thereto, that he who doeth as I have done shall in like manner suffer.'

"Perceiving that my aged host was becoming weary—else, maybe, overcome by some hidden emotion—I thought to take my departure, and on the point of bidding him adieu, believing it no more than **right** to requite his inestimable services, begged his acceptance of something more substan-

tial than mere thanks, thereupon tendering him a well filled purse.

“‘Nay, nay, good friend!’ the Ancient expostulates. ‘Desist, I beg. Of gold I have not need, so put up thy purse; but remember this, that should you chance on some needy mortal, put in such an hand that thou wouldst so generously bestow on me.’

CHAPTER VI.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

“EXTENDING a hand in farewell, I returned to my waiting comrades, mounted, gave the word, and we were off, our steeds seemingly as desirous to take leave as were their riders.

“Barely on the way, I chanced to look back, and saw the old man standing in the doorway of his little cabin, with gaze intently fixed on our retreating forms. Then a shout of ‘God-speed,’ and retreat in the inside of the cabin, which entering, the door was closed; betaking himself, no doubt, to his accustomed supernal cogitations, while as to myself, I was completely wrapped up in that to which I had so lately been an eager listener, and I could come to but the one conclusion—that this strange personage was, of a verity, a disembodied spirit manifest in the flesh—else, a rank impostor. But, whichever it was, I had fulfilled my mission, feeling amply rewarded for the trouble incident to the lengthy journey; not only this, but the vexed question as relating to the tablets was forever set at rest, our wise men at home set at naught—probably much to their chagrin, for, as they at one time avowed, ‘there was no meaning whatever to be attached to the outlandish symbols. Hence, in so far as any good could come from their attempted

solution, they might just as well be cast into the sea.' Suffice it to say, their averments were wholly disproved, for I had in my possession ample proofs to the contrary, in the form of a legible written manuscript, which, published, would without doubt set the wiseacres of the kingdom all agog.

"Well, Joe, it is high time I was bringing the history of my adventures to an ending, so I will only farther add that, on reaching the dock, anchor was weighed, sail set, and in a little less than sixty-five days thereafter I was threading the thronged streets of the world's metropolis, a comparatively happy man, for I had met with unqualified success.

"There, Joe, you have the whole story in a nutshell—so to speak, and a pretty hard one to crack, as I imagine—but under all and every circumstance, please not to forget that 'Mum's the word,' for were my friends—especially army comrades—to get hold of the story, I would never hear the last of it; for, to a man, they'd swear I was fit subject for a lunatic asylum, else victim of some strange hallucination; maybe not far out of the way in the latter assertion, for you must know it is a hard matter to explain doings of an unearthly character."

I freely assented to the Colonel's stipulation relative to the enjoined secrecy, and how faithfully I have kept my promise my readers must be the ones to decide. I am positive, however, that he is not much displeased, as otherwise the fact would long ago have been made manifest. Still, there are good and sufficient reasons for his silence, because the Royal Blues were shortly after ordered to foreign parts, while I settled down to work, now and then recuperating my overly taxed energies

by visiting relatives in the aforesaid county town—visits expected soon to cease, inasmuch as bans of my marriage have already been published, so it will, in all probability, not be long before the nuptials are celebrated—that is to say, unless some other equally good-looking fellow put in prior claim, in which event, instead of the nuptials, look out for a duel, etc. Furthermore, should any misguided individual be led to question the accuracy of the forthcoming narrative, wherein is told, in a straightforward manner, the first appearance of man, moulded from the brown earth; afterward, from a rib taken from his side was fashioned the woman—his companion and helpmeet; subsequent treachery of their mutual friend, “The Serpent”; startling adventures of Jubal, “the first-born”; whereat is related the circumstances as connected with taking the innkeeper’s eldest daughter to wife; the graphic story of the Deluge, together with remarkable events along down a succession of ages, until at last the discovery and exhuming of the long hidden remains of the author of the history, as recorded on the silver tablets. To all these, I beg leave to refer skeptical people to the Ancient Mountain Hut Dweller for confirmation, as he, and he alone, is responsible for their truthfulness.

Yours truly,

(Signed)

JOSEPH LINDLEY, Lawyer.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER VII.

PARADISE.

(As translated from the Silver Tablets.)

'TWAS a charming scene, as night's silvery veil hung low on Eden's lovely bosom. Twilight shades giving place to evening's deepening gloom, partially relieved by the yellow rays of the newly risen moon, her brilliant beams both softening and enhancing the glories of the enchanting spectacle. The firmament all aglow with myriads of flashing gems, that lent an additional charm, as looking down on a world but just emerged from out thick darkness that so lately hovered over and enveloped its entire surface. Thus, the Master having finished all to his liking, rests. The declining sun on this the sixth and last day, witnessing the completion of his labors, and while the vast immensity of space is thickly studded with flashing gems—supposedly other worlds. This, the last, notably the least, yet, withal, the best—because its proportions are of the utmost symmetry, its architecture the very acme of perfection.

The night advances, passes away, and morn approaches, ushering in another, the seventh day—

a day wherein all labor shall cease, wherein all may rest.

Anon, the source of light, that glorious orb, the Sun, fresh from the Master's hand, rises. Its golden beams illuminating and flashing o'er hill and dale. The heavens are all aglow in the brilliant setting.

But what a glorious scene, on which the eye rests; be it of supernal, or mortal vision, for sin hath not yet entered, leaving its blighting influence. No curse hath fallen, therefore all is now in readiness for the advent of one in the Master's image—he to take full and complete charge, having dominion over every living thing, animate or inanimate; human or brute; and ere the setting of another sun, to assume a place in the economy of nature but a little removed from the heavenly hosts above.

As the day advances, the mists of the early dawn give way before the enlivening beams of the now well risen orb, whose brilliant rays reveal to the onlooker—were there such—what and of whom?

A form, herculean of build, yet of the most exquisite symmetry, of immense height, yet finely proportioned, a head massive, though shapely, locks of midnight hue, eyes that scintillate in their intensity, yet mild in expression. The skin of a reddish cast. The form in nature's garb, yet, withal, one may readily discern in this, the Master's last, yet noblest handiwork. The first man moulded, and fashioned from the "dust of the earth."

This man, reclining on a moss-grown bank, for this was his only couch; underneath, tiny rivulets

sparkling waters; overhead, drooping, nigh to the ground, leaf-laden bough and flowering bush, with petals opening to the sun's early, yet invigorating rays.

The man seems lost in thought, evidently absorbed in contemplation of the strange scenes wherewith he is surrounded, or, perchance, in startled wonderment, as to whence he came, and whither bound.

On the man's right, and but little way removed, crouches a Nubian lion. To the left, and on whose magnificent form an arm rests, lies a Bengal tiger. Both the lion and tiger in an expectant rather than apprehensive attitude, their eyes are never for an instant turned away.

On the thither bank of the rivulet, basking under the sun's heated rays, lies in voluminous coils as though meditating a sudden spring, an enormous serpent. From its attitude one would have concluded it was sleeping, though this was dispelled upon seeing the eyes, glittering in their malignity, peer cautiously forth between half-opened lids and gaze fixedly on the reclining form.

Stretching away in the far distance, may be seen representatives of the entire animal kingdom, among which may be reckoned the elephant, mastodon, zebra, camel, and a host of lesser note, all dwelling together in amity, peace, love, harmony and kindly regard, having as yet not given way to antipathies engendered by unchecked passion and fostered through ferocious hate.

Here, too, may be seen the feathered tribes; for away up in yon azure vault is the great condor, winging his way to some lonely mountain crag; at

lesser height, sweeping in ever narrowing circles, sails the bald eagle, while from lowly thicket and towering bush, rise songs of melody, intermingled with quack of duck, cronk of goose, discordant note of blue-jay, chattering magpie, croak of buzzard and crow, and from out the neighboring wood, shrill note of quail, and boom of drumming partridge.

Again, look away over to yon horizon's misty verge, where sporting on the blue sea wave, are seen the spouting whale and shark, with many another deep sea monster, while on the sluggish streams spanning Paradise, we behold the great behemoth, log-like crocodile and alligator, each in its sphere content and happy.

The skies, too, are of a pure, translucent blue. The clouds even take on a hue like unto golden sheafs, the air charged with rarest odors. The plains abounding with fruits and flowers—in themselves, a wealth of nature's rarest gifts to man's enjoyment given—all these fresh and new from the Master's hand divine.

Such was Paradise, ere the blighting influence of sin had entered its sacred precincts; such would the world be now, were sin eliminated.

CHAPTER VIII.

FASHIONING THE WOMAN.

THE head of the form reclining on the mossy bank, droops, falls, the entire being lies motionless, outstretched. The eyes are closed, no signs of life apparent other than stentorian respiration, for slumber hath enchained its every sense and feeling.

Thus, through the live-long day, the apparently lifeless form reposes, the shades of night bringing no change. Meanwhile, all is still. Nature, like the prostrate form, is in a state of repose, yet not entirely so, for floating on the evening air, one listens to the gently murmuring rivulet, all other sounds are held in abeyance, for an act is to be performed.

Morn draweth nigh; the majestic orb, consecrated to a world's illumination, rises from away beyond the distant hills, the shades of night flee before the brilliant radiance, the chill air of early morn dissolves under his searching beams.

Birds of every feather flit from twig to branch. Again are heard rising from sedgy pool quack of duck and cronk of goose, while from the far-away wood is heard the panthers' fierce cry, lions' roar, bark of wolf, along with a great multitude

of sounds common to animate existence. Thus nature waked to consciousness—life and activity resume their normal sway.

For what good reason hath this newly created being thus reposed the day and night through? What cause assigned for the deep unconscious slumber? Surely a problem of easy solution, when one comprehends the significance of a transaction that has taken place, for during the silent watches of the night, a rib hath been removed and transformed unto a living, breathing, sentient being.

The long confined limbs are stretched to their utmost tension, the figure assumes an erect posture, the while in a singular state of wonderment, as to what enchantment or other potent influence hath so inveigled else beguiled the senses.

Anon, the drowsy eyes partially open, followed by an eager, enquiring gaze, but, on what, and on whom do his eyes rest? A counterpart of himself? Hardly, for here is a figure, in some respects very like his own, in others quite dissimilar.

Long does he gaze on the beautiful creature until so overcome and startled, so enthralled his every sense and faculty, so convulsed his emotions, that he thinks to flee the angelic presence, and when about to turn away, suddenly bethinks himself, in that inquiry were not out of place, yet ere he has time to frame a single sentence, a hand is placed on his shoulder, yet of such gentle touch, he scarcely heeds the pressure, at the same time his glowing orbs confronted by those of heavenly blue, beaming in anxious inquiry, then, in ecstasy of delight, accentuated by a smile of winning tenderness—and as the lovely being gazes, a return look of

welcome greets her astonished vision, for mate hath found its mate, and all is well. However, before their minds are so composed as to exchange mutual confidence, a voice thunderous in volume, yet modulated to the gentlest expression, speaks:

“My son, thou wert lonely. I give to thee a companion. Thou needeth assistance; behold thy helpmate.

“Dost ask from whence she came, for answer? During the silent watches of the past night, I caused thee to fall in deep sleep, and while thy slumbering faculties were steeped in heavenly visions, the gates above were cast ajar, because of this maiden offering herself in sacrifice to thy welfare, and that thou mayest have better understanding relative to the inestimable treasure thou hast secured, likewise, in what manner, I would have thee to know this:

“That from thy side I didst take a rib, fashioning the maiden therefrom; therefore she is now ‘Bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh.’ See to it, then, ye guard her well. Be to her a shield in time of peril, a helper in trouble, protecting her from foes without, and foes within, so that she be not led astray, nor from thy side depart, for of verity, temptations sore will oft time beset her. Be to her then an ark of refuge, and if so be at any time she flee to thee for protection, turn not from her; on the contrary, let her find in thee a friend in need. Furthermore, I would have thee to know this: that all thou seest, is thine, beasts of whatsoever kind or degree, the fowl that flieth in the air, the fish that swims in the sea, over all these do I give thee dominion; likewise the fruits of the garden, all—

save one—are thine, and of which thou mayest freely partake.

“Seest thou yon tree, freighted with the choicest of all that groweth in the garden? On this thou mayest look, but not touch, neither thou nor the woman, for in the day thou doeth the wicked thing, in that day thou shalt die, for in this garden I have planted all thou requireth, for delight and enjoyment.

“Sickness nor pain nor trouble of any sort, storm, tempest and the pestilence that walketh by noon-day, of all these thou shalt not have knowledge, neither thou, nor they that come after. See to it then thou obeyest these, my commands, lest ill betide thee.”

CHAPTER IX.

PARADISE IN ITS FULL MEANING.

DURING the foregoing interview with the Master, the pair have stood with bowed heads and down-cast eyes, but now in full expectation of again encountering the gaze of the divine being who has so placed it in their power to be supremely happy, they raise their heads and eyes, only to find themselves alone. The Master has silently and suddenly departed.

The newly awakened pair, absorbed in contemplation of the words to which they have just listened, and to which 'twere well they give heed, remain for a time spell-bound, for strive as they may, their minds are still bent on the mysterious tree, the fruit of which is so urgently forbidden, though as yet no misgivings assail them, for they indulge no thought of disobedience because not disposed to go contrary to the Master's wishes.

Thus, for a time, they wander,—Paradise, in its full meaning, beginning to dawn on their bewildered senses—too happy within themselves, to question the meaning, too much absorbed in the delights with which they are surrounded, to anticipate the result.

Thus roaming at will, the most sequestered and

out-of-the-way places engaging their attention—for this is the first, and thus far the only opportunity presented for extended survey of their newly acquired possessions—until at length wearied, they turn back to the original trysting place—"the mossy grown bank"—where for a time in unconstrained converse they linger, the one engrossing theme—"the forbidden fruit." To this, however, they would hardly have given a thought were it not for the stern command: "Of this tree, thou must not partake."

Communing in this manner, their attention is ere long drawn to the strange movements of their friend, the Serpent, who though heretofore unseen, has nevertheless been an interested listener to the Master's warnings, and is now observed crawling away and casting now and then a backward glance fearful that his presence at the late interview with the Master, may possibly have been noticed, hence, as a natural sequence, his motive understood. Moreover, the treacherous friend and former ally is at this precise moment meditating an act whereby his friends must perforce become his bitterest enemies.

Not that he is especially anxious for this result, but that, as he imagines, he has wrongs to be righted, whereupon he enters on soliloquy thus: "Aha, my friend, methinks it goes without saying, that henceforth my every energy shall be directed—no matter how unpropitious the outcome—to setting things to rights, at the same time unmindful as to who shall be the greatest sufferer, and woe to they, who in any manner whatsoever, attempt to stand in my way or thrust me aside.

"Why the Master should have deigned to give

the simpleton not only dominion over the beasts of the field, but every living creature—including myself, of course,—passeth my comprehension. Why, then, I ask, was I left out of the compact? Why overlooked in the controversy, when every one can but know 'twas my due, likewise my right to be invited along with the others, to hold consultation? Yet, come to think, maybe I was not considered worthy of the honor nor of his majesty's confidence—Majesty, indeed, when he is considered by every one that knows him to be my inferior.

“Ha! a thought doth strike me, in this, that they doubtless think to hoodwink me, regarding these wondrously important affairs. However, we shall see—let it all pass, I'll e'en give the troublesome matter no farther thought, nor lie awake o' nights, but all the same, hie me to my den, there conjure some scheme whereby to entrap the lovely maiden—he, I care nothing for—but she! I'll so fascinate, so beguile, Ha! ha!—that she will leave all, afterward turn to me, heeding my every wish, doing my every bidding, else, shall her doom be sealed. Of her own seeking, however, leastwise, I'll make it so appear. Meantime, present my case to the Master in such a light, that it will at once be accepted, and that without question. Moreover, I will bring to bear such powerful temptations, so compromise the fair one in the eyes of him she doth so glibly call 'Lord,'—that is to say, the one that doth lay claim to rule her—that in the end she must become in very truth my slave, powerless to avert, or in any manner whatsoever change her fate, for my wiles she cannot escape; and then, too, 'this forbidden fruit,' why, it's nothing more than a fool-

ish threat, for what careth the Master for one tree more than another?

"I will so cover my tracks, my designs so conceal that the Master himself cannot help but be deceived, then will he hold me guiltless of wrongdoing. Meantime the man cast out from the garden, what's to hinder me from taking his place as ruler therein, and should he be so inclined as to question by what right I usurp his place, I will for answer say: 'Thou wouldst none of me in thy counsels, I was not even bidden to attend, for this slight on mine honor, thus my good name imperilled,' for all this I say, 'thou shalt suffer. Yea, I will be avenged. Deep, deadly, shall it be; then will my wrongs be righted, my good name restored, my honor retrieved.'"

'Twas thus the Serpent meditated, it was in this manner the false friend studied injury to his best friends. Meanwhile, the innocent, unsuspecting objects of his wrath have turned away and are now strolling through the by-paths of the garden, wholly unconscious of the trap so ingeniously set and skillfully baited, and into which they must inevitably fall.

Thus wandering, they arrive at the more secluded portions of the garden, the intricate ways disclosing new beauties at each onward step. The while in full enjoyment of the delights so lavishly spread around, and the wondrous scenes momentarily brought to view, for here were two hearts beating in unison, two souls in perfect harmony, hence the unconstrained felicity.

They pluck of the choicest fruits, they eat to repletion—ever and anon, casting backward glances

toward the forbidden tree, but never for an instant failing in remembrance of the Master's injunction.

The Serpent chanced the next morning to encounter the object of his insane affection—little chance about it, for the consummate rascal was on the lookout, watching her every movement.

Thus sauntering along the mossy bank of the silvery stream, now and then halting to pluck some more than ordinary choice flower, else, permitting her enraptured gaze to rest on the beautiful form mirrored in its crystal depths, for of a thousand and one none so charming. Alas! fatal gifts, fatal charms, not alone to her, but to the whole world as well; yet, notwithstanding these charms and gifts, the Serpent, whose jealous fancies, largely intensified by ill-concealed desire, resolved to present an outwardly friendly mien, so on meeting, accosts her in kindly greeting—the words flowing from his forked tongue in pleasing accents, and tender expression—for when so minded, his voice could be attuned to the sweetest melody, but when angered, the words were hissed forth; yet now, having a specific object in view, would let nothing drop from his lips savoring of enmity. So began by saying: “Maiden of the golden locks, countenance bespeaking a tender heart, mien, both modest and winsome. Thou, the last, yet noblest of the Master's handiwork. Thou, who harbor'st within thy fair bosom naught but purity, and that hath no place for guile, whose soul art overflowing with generous impulses, among which are love, hope and charity, these pervading thy every thought—I wouldst, if it so please thee, for a few

brief moments bespeak thy attention. Yea, I would utter words of wisdom, and for thy ear alone—words, I ween, tending to thy best welfare; at the same time, I do solemnly swear, that what I am about to say to thee, hath no selfish motive, on the contrary, it is to thy own best interests, because thou art imperilled, maybe, thy life in jeopardy. To this end, and for these reasons alone, do I desire to hold communion with thee.”

“My interests imperilled? My life in jeopardy?” the maiden exclaims. “What mean thee, good friend? Why should I be thus troubled?”

“Dost know, fair maid, this man to whom the Master hath given thee can in nowise be compared to him who doth so earnestly plead for thy love? Dost know this, fair one, I repeat? Ah, why so hesitate; thy form doth tremble, thou art ill at ease, as one far less skilled in diplomacy may readily discern; nevertheless, I am equally positive, thou art not altogether satisfied with thy choice—though, I’ll warrant, thou hadst little enough to do with the choosing. Why, do but look on me, then ask thyself, ‘If my complexion be not wholly unlike his—a dull brick red—while as to mine, it glisteneth in the sunlight, like unto the finest spun silk. Scales, like unto burnished silver; then again behold my elongated form with a crushing force none can withstand; then look at my head, flat and tapering, ’tis true, yet of how much better shape than his ugly pate? Orbs, too, that glow in similitude of sparkling gems. Dost comprehend, fair one, these my sayings? If so, then look on the other picture. Form singularly uncouth, standing on two feet only, at either extremity projections,

denominated 'toes,'—surely a poor foundation whereon to rest, especially when compared with one whose whole length doth rest on solid ground, and while yon monstrosity doth presume to hold his head so high, mine on occasion, can easily overtop it.

"Again, look at the creature's head. Out of all proportion to the rest of his body, and covered with bristly, tan colored locks, but when one comes to examine the face, matted over with a long, coarse beard, which were it not so artfully concealed, would, I'll warrant, reveal an ugliness, you, yourself, with all your charity, could not well abide, and last, but by no means least, we come to the eyes, overhung with brows, one can compare to nothing less than a tangled pile of brushwood.

"Once more, the monster's skin, a dingy red—and why not, when the ugly creature was fashioned from the very dust of the earth on which thy shapely feet do at this moment stand.

"Lovely one, how, in the name of goodness, can thou abide such an unkempt being, especially when better ones are to be had for the asking? Dost understand, fair one? Then why not give ear to words of wisdom, for I do swear they are naught but the truth.

"Most winsome and lovely of all created objects, have compassion on one who doth so urgently plead his cause. See, he crawls at thy feet, bows his head in the dust, yea, doth implore, entreat and persistently sue for thy good will.

"Wilt thou not, then, flee from one who, now thy servant may, and doubtless will, ere the passage of many suns, have become master, thou in turn his

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servant—peradventure, slave—come to me, then, and it shall go hard with me, do I not lift thee to the topmost pinnacle of fame. Riches and honor shall be thine. All the world holdeth in store will come at thy behest, all bow at thy feet.

“Thou shalt go forth conquering and to conquer. Leading captive whomsoever thou wilt, for none will behold but to admire; moreover, thy form shall be decked in a garb not one whit inferior to my own and to all these I will add gems and precious stones. Diamonds of the first water depend from thine ears, bands of virgin gold encircle thy arms, while on thy chestnut locks a crown interspersed with brilliants.

“On the other hand, turn from me—as thou seemest about to do—all the sorrows possible and more than thou canst well conceive, much less withstand, shall be visited on thy head. In lieu of diamonds and precious stones, thou wilt be only too glad to take up with the commoner sort—if, perchance, thou art fortunate enough to possess even these—instead of garb like mine own, the coarser raiment will best befit thy lowly station.

“These hands, so soft and white, will, from excessive and long sustained toil, become black, and hardened. These tapering fingers, instead of being encircled with golden bands, will, from outdoor labor, become calloused, hard and blunted. Thy countenance, now bright and winsome, will have taken on a dulled, repulsive expression. The light that now in splendor beams from out those charming eyes, thus revealing their crystal depths, will have departed, never more to return.

“Thy complexion, comparing favorably with the

full-blown rose, will give place to a hue **very** like the dust brown earth. In short, all thy beauty gone, who so poor as to do thee reverence? Finally, and to sum all up, the curse so lavishly bestowed on thee, in case thou refuseth the terms so generously and unselfishly offered, shall not fall alone on thee, but to all who come after."

This last sentence barely uttered, when without an instant warning, there comes a flash of lightning, quickly succeeded by thunder roll. The heavens darkened as at midnight, and a voice speaks the one word, "Beware."

CHAPTER X.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE MAIDEN AND THE SERPENT CONTINUED.

DURING this interview, the maiden has remained a passive listener, the Serpent on his part maintaining his usual outward composure—though inwardly chafing, from the fact that his hearer seems so little affected, for storm and threaten as he may, he readily perceives that neither the one nor the other in the least moves her. Furthermore, should the wily villain resort to argument or even entreaty, both would be equally thrown away, for nothing he says seems to find lodgment in her heart. Therefore, he is considerably cast down, and were the truth told, not a little frightened. The late thunderings contributing to that end, at the same time deeming it unpolitic to give way to his fears, which may prove unfounded, he still believes it the wiser course to assume a bold front, thereupon breaking forth:

“Ha, the Master speaks, but, methinks, ’twere better He make use of gentler tone rather than bellow in this unseemly fashion, for shout He ever so loud, thunder as He may, and hide the sunlight as He will, His lordship well knows I am not easily frightened. Likewise the powers I wield are but little inferior to His own. More than this,

it seemeth passing strange, His majesty should thus stoop to interfere between the maiden and me. Yet, have her I will, and who shall say me Nay!"

Alas, the guileless, warm-hearted creature has yet to learn the true meaning of "Good and Evil," for treachery and deceit are at this moment brought to bear not only to her discomfiture but her downfall as well, so with agitated tones and trembling lips, she replies, giving this for answer:

"Good friend, and true—as I had always supposed—didst thou have the will to do all this, thou hast not, methinks, the power."

"Power!" quoth the Serpent. "Who, let me ask, hath greater? Have I not shown thee that I am second only in command, thus endowed with the power for 'good and evil'? Know ye not this, I repeat? Which, let me ask, the greater—that which maketh for good or that for evil? and as the Master holdeth undisputed title to the one, so do I to the other, as I'll not be slow in showing thee, do ye not heed my behests.

"Behold, beloved one, the fruit, this so-called apple plucked but a few moments since from yonder tree. See, how fair it is to look upon, but how much better to the taste; but see how golden its hue, how sweet its fragrance, very like to the rose; yet taste, and then will thine eyes be opened, all the blessings I've foretold follow thy lead; moreover, all thou canst in any manner desire, nay, all thou chooseth to ask—even to riches and honor—shall be thine, and that which is more to the purpose, thou shalt be endowed with the knowledge of 'good and evil,' and still more, thou shalt be

as the gods—I also—for whatsoever tendeth to thy welfare, in that will I share.

“Taste then, I do beseech thee, yea, taste of this fragrant apple, the best of all the garden, then, wilt thou find all that I have said, naught but the truth.”

The guileless maiden little suspects the outward fair seeming of the one with whom she is holding converse to be other than he seems, for as a companion, he has universally treated her with the utmost consideration and respect, as a friend, one in whom she could place the most implicit confidence, hence, has never for an instant, harbored the thought that he was capable of betraying her confidence, nor her unqualified trust in either, but now she feels that she has good reason to suspect his avowals of unselfishness and denials of untruth as merely a subterfuge to cover his duplicity and thus be able to accomplish his wicked designs; yet, did she but know the true facts in the case she would without hesitation recognize in the scamp the so-called “Father of Liars”—the arch fiend himself.

The maiden, however, hesitates. Was ever maiden so generously, aye, helplessly tempted? Yet the one condition, “All bow to thy charms,” seemed to settle the whole matter, for she no longer hesitates—the promise is too weighty to be overcome. She tastes, she eats, then hastens to the man with countenance expressive of the great joy within her and carrying the joyous news.

“But,” remonstrates he, in response to her urgent request, “the apple is forbidden; remember ye not the Master’s anathemas: ‘In the day ye eat thereof,

in that day ye shall surely die'? Thou canst not have forgotten them so soon."

"But taste, my lord. That was only a foolish threat, at least so intimated by one who surely ought to know. Nothing, I'll warrant, meant by it, and even should the Master be angered, He will, I am positive, be only too glad to overlook the offence—if such it be—probably forgive, and, what's more, in the end forget about it. Why, do you know," she expostulates, "our good friend, the Serpent, the very soul of honor—anyhow, that is his reputation—and as to telling an untruth, why, I'd stake my life upon his veracity."

Like unto the woman, the man hesitates; indeed he can think of no suitable reply to make, notably when taking in account the injunction of the Master: "Guard her from foes without and foes within."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PENALTY OF DISOBEDIENCE.

ON this supreme moment hangs the fate of a world, for on his decision is determined the destiny of all future generations.

Again the woman presents the apple, holds it to his mouth, presses it to his lips; words of entreaty accompany the foolish act, an expression of fondness lights up the winsome face, again, the one word—"Eat!"

The man hesitates no longer. He tastes, eats—was ever fruit so delicious? Ever apple of so fine flavor?

The deed is done, a world's fate decided. But as yet no thought is taken of the penalty, as adjudged by the Master: "In the day ye eat thereof, in that day, ye shall surely die." But no harm has yet befallen them. The skies are of the same cerulean blue, no lightning flash hath blinded their eyes, no thunder roll assailed their ears; the beams of the noonday sun still flame o'er hill and dale, nor do they hear the Master's angered voice.

But now comes a reaction. Why these troubled thoughts? Why these forebodings? Surely not of evil, else 'twould, ere this, have been made apparent. Nevertheless a change has taken place, for their accustomed cheerful demeanor gives way to evil

surmisings; thus all things wear a different aspect, for their eyes are turned toward each other in questioning glances. The while the woman's face suffused with blushes, his glow with apprehension, and now comes the thought, "Where, oh, where shall I turn for sympathy?" For, indeed, it was never more needed. To the man shall she turn? Nay, for he is in not one whit better plight; on the contrary, if such were possible, even more perplexed than she.

Thus for a time they remain, their hearts, through fear, momentarily growing cold, their minds filled with an agony of dread.

A transformation surely hath taken place! Their once happy feelings somehow changed, their eyes are gradually opening to the unwelcome fact that clothed in Nature's garb is, to say the least, hardly in good taste, and it begins to dawn on their minds that they are no better off than their mute neighbors; in point of fact, less to be envied, for the "beasts of the field" are clad in furs. But what shall be done? A moment's hesitation, and they separate, each taking a different route, shortly to appear clothed in garments of leaves plucked from the fig, and now are their eyes opened, as foretold; they are, for a verity, "gods, knowing good from evil," but in what respect is their condition bettered? Partaking of forbidden fruit has proved not only a source of knowledge, but of misery as well.

Again, hand in hand, they wander, the garden presenting no fewer attractions, yet looked upon in a very different light, for when but a little while before—in Nature's garb—their hearts were light,

no suspicion of anything derogatory to their good name had crossed their path, no thought of wrongdoing entered their minds, whereas doubt, hesitancy and secret forebodings now control their every action.

Yet, hark! Again that voice in thunderous tone; again that lightning flash and darkened heavens, and as the notes echo from hill to hill—not as of yore in melodious rhythm, but in angered tone—it speaks: “Orimentes, where art thou?”

How is it that he whom the Master calls appears not at the bidding; rather seeks the more secluded parts of the wood? Why doth he so shun the Master’s presence? Alas! the cause becomes fully apparent upon true interpretation of the Master’s injunction: “In the day ye eat thereof, in that day, ye shall surely die.” Likewise the promise as foretold by the Serpent: “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good from evil.” The promise is fulfilled, for they have in very truth become as gods, in this one respect at least the penalty hath been adjudged, and now with downcast mien and bowed head Orimentes comes forth from his hiding.

“Why hast thou disobeyed, thus setting at defiance my well-meant command?” exclaims the Master. “Was it not enough that I didst promise thee all the fruit of the garden? Why, then, couldst thou not have been content therewith?”

“Alas! and yet alas!” moans the convicted culprit, “it is alone the fault of the woman, for she not only placed the accursed fruit to my lips, but didst urge, even implored, me to accept of it; moreover, ’twas from her hand I didst take, taste and eat. But, Master, be not wroth with thy servant,

for I most solemnly promise the offence shall not be repeated; indeed, I will never again hearken to the woman's pleadings."

For answer: "Call the woman, for I would test the accuracy of thy seemingly absurd statement; yet, and so thou attempt to deceive me through casting aspersions on the character of thy companion, woe be to thee!"

And now Orimentides, the woman, comes from out the wood, whereunto she didst likewise flee, and as she approaches presents a far more woebegone aspect than he, but when confronted with the charge, replies:

"Master, 'twas the fault of our old friend, the Serpent, in that he didst so beguile me, and that against my will and better judgment, promising much gold, likewise silver and precious gems, meantime stipulating that I should be clad in raiment not one whit inferior to his own, and last, but by no means least, 'that all should bow to my charms.'

"Believing him sincere in his protestations of friendship, I therefore considered it impossible that he could so demean himself as to deliberately utter a falsehood, therein counselling unadvisedly, why, Master, how could I do otherwise than yield? But, Master, spare us! Spare and forgive, for of a verity I was the victim of misplaced confidence, therefore unwittingly led astray, and so I begged Orimentes to partake; and, Master, as this is the first, so will it be the last offence."

"Wicked, rebellious subjects!" exclaims the Master. "Did I not give thee all, yea, even more than the Serpent promised? Did I not prepare a gar-

den, a paradise, wherein peace and quietude didst reign supreme, where thou and thine would be free from storm, pestilence and famine, together with the trials common to earthly existence? And yet thou must needs, on the first opportunity presenting, disobey my just and lawful demands! Verily, it doth repent me that I consented to make man at all, and I am minded to destroy both he and all that hath being, in order the ground be no more cumbered therewith. However, on second thought, I will give thee one more trial, yet under less favorable conditions, in this, that thou go away from this delightful garden." Then, in tones penetrating to its most secluded depths:

"Orimentes, whatsoever thou mayest hereafter possess, shall be gained by the sweat of thy brow, to which end I do now curse the ground for thy sake, so that it bring forth naught other than by the hardest labor. Thorns and brambles shall beset thy pathway, thistles spring up on every hand; turn which ever way thou wilt dangers encompass thee round about.

"The wilderness shall be thy abiding place, the desert thy habitation, tempest, pestilence and drought thy heritage; all the woes inseparable to cast-off humanity shall be thy portion."

To the woman: "Orimentides, this man thou wilt henceforth follow, he the master, thou the servant, compelled to do whatsoever he may see fit to demand. Thy estate pain, grief and trouble, inasmuch as thy transgression, as thou must know, is by far greater than his, and whatsoever ills may chance to visit him, will, with redoubled force, fall on thee.

"Should this sentence seem hard to bear, remember 'tis of thine own seeking, for thou hast not turned aside from the soul-destroying attributes of folly, selfishness and undue pride—this latter trait always going before a fall.

"Take heed, then, to these my words; meantime, make every effort to conquer thy evil desires, lest, peradventure, a worse fate betide thee, for 'he who diggeth a pit for another shall be the first to fall therein.' And yet I would not thou suffer altogether in vain; on the contrary, in love of offspring and family ties thou shalt find both comfort and consolation, hence I desire thee to be fruitful, to the end thou multiply and replenish the earth. And now, having finished with thee, I would a word with the author and abettor of thy misfortune," who, be it said, with forked tongue, glistening eyes and uplifted crest holds himself aloof, coiled at the root of a majestic oak, and while anticipating his fate, at this supreme moment maintains an outward semblance of unconcern, at the same time, green with envy, largely enhanced through overweening jealousy because forsooth, while the others have through the Master's high regard, received sentence, he has been overlooked. Thus in the Master's estimate, held least, else why should they, equally guilty, have preference?

The slimy creature is no longer to be passed by, however, for on appearance, in response to the call, the Master, in a voice of wrath, exclaims:

"Thou vile wretch, to whom was, at thine own request, given power of speech, likewise endowed with all known attributes of evil, therefore wert adjudged preference over all the beasts of the field,

methinks it ill becomes one holding such lofty position to thus endeavor to overthrow my well-established laws, particularly when thou must have known the consequences."

The Serpent, on the point of lifting up his voice in expostulation, or, perhaps, in justification of the wrong done, whereby his late companions have suffered irreparable wrong, is quickly silenced upon hearing condemnation followed by speedy sentence.

Saith the Master: "In expiation of thy wicked doings I do hereby take from thee the gift of speech; even thy feet shall be removed, thy belly thine only support; furthermore, to make thy name a byword and reproach of all men, thou wilt be despised for thy meanness and held up in derision by every living creature. Whithersoever thou goest every hand will be lifted against thee, while an evil reputation will at all times attend thee, for none must forget that under thy tongue is hidden a venom; from which they you chance to meet will turn aside, shunning thee as a dangerous character; yet, that they be made aware of thy presence, I do hereby attach a signal to thy posterior for the purpose of giving warning to all who travel thy way. Farthermore, attributes of evil hitherto exercised alone by thee, from this on are delegated to another, who will bear the cognomen of Satan, who, often under guise of a pleasing exterior, lets not his identity be disclosed, nor even his character suspected, hence, the more to be feared.

"Doth question the right whereby thou art dispossessed of thy inheritance? Doth wonder why thy olden time privileges are so abridged? Then look on the evil wrought, and by thee alone. Not-

withstanding all this, the penalty cannot be escaped, for thy habitation shall henceforth be in a cleft of the rock, thy noisome progeny the lawful prey to those who may so choose to take advantage of thy misfortunes and give heed to my decree.

“Should the crime appear of lesser magnitude than the penalty, remember it is a fate that sooner or later overtakes all evil doers, for as much as thou couldst not be content with the powers I did confer upon thee, but needs seek enlarged ones. But I have said enough. Away, then, I would no more of ye, and turn not back thinking to re-enter the garden’s sacred precincts, for a flaming sword have I set at the gate; and now to sum all up, know thou this— ‘That Paradise lost can never be regained.’ ”

’Twas thus they parted, the unhappy conspirators going out from the celestial garden, where so many joyous hours have been spent, their eyes first opened to the delights of a paradise nevermore, as the Master had said, “to be regained.”

They are now to seek new homes; some remote clime maybe to witness their advent, meanwhile, their journeyings beset by all manner of dangers; their lives harassed beyond measure. Surely when contrasting their present miserable condition with the past happy lot it was a bitter exchange.

Their only recourse now lies in adapting themselves to their present surroundings, thus in some slight degree seeking to alleviate the sting of remorse which so settles down upon them as to make life almost a burden.

But how fares the Serpent? Doth he journey alongside the friends so deeply wronged? Nay! on the contrary, disposed to heed the Master’s man-

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date, he crawls away to some mountain fastnesses where, free to exercise his wicked wiles unmolested, he forgets in some measure his once while lofty station, thus submitting to his fate without repining and scarcely wishing it otherwise.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEASTS TAKE THEIR DEPARTURE.

'Twas but a day after the expulsion from Paradise that the great gates were thrown open and the animal kingdom came forth, some following in the wake of their strongly attached friends, whose dominion, as we have seen, was forever to hold sway, others gathering in distinct groups, as inclination prompted or mutual interest seemed to dictate. Thus journeying to distant lands, even to the more remote portions of the globe, for the Master's curse was not to man alone, but to all living creatures.

The struggles of this unhappy pair now begin. The very existence of these poor, forlorn—nearly helpless—beings depending largely on their unaided efforts, for they are compelled to go out into the wilderness single handed, entirely destitute of resources save those furnished by Nature; hence, it is safe to say that naught but barren and frequently sterile fields are encountered. Desert plains loom up on every hand, while thorns and brambles, as foretold, obstruct their onward way. And what a transformation! Paradise, where peace, happiness and contentment reigned supreme; all these given place to an untrodden wilderness; ceaseless exertion al-

lied to unwearied toil barely sufficing to obtain the commonest necessities of life, and yet the principal cause for unhappiness hinges on the fact that such a needless sacrifice was made for such poor and unsatisfactory results, and all accruing from the senseless act of defying the Master's proclamation: "Of this tree ye must not eat." An apple in exchange for the felicities of Paradise!

"Alas!" moaneth the man, the while heaping reproaches on the head of the woman: "Had I not hearkened to thee all would now be well."

"In that thou speaketh the truth. Yet had I not hearkened to the ill-advised sayings of our lately attached friend, the Serpent, all would now be well. But what hath become of his lordship? Methinks in this the hour of adversity it ill becometh him to desert those he has so foully wronged?"

"'Tis but the way of the world, Orimentides, as thou wilt soon enough learn, for it is said, you know, 'That friends are only such in times of one's prosperity,' " replies the man.

Notwithstanding these ill-natured, though common enough carpings, peace is ere long restored, the twain continuing their journeyings for the space of many moons, until finally they chance on a region in every way adapted to prolonged habitation, so they at once proceed to locate, first erecting a suitable dwelling in the form of a log cabin, of course, of crude construction and limited in size, yet, it is believed, fully adequate for all needed requirements.

A twelvemonth elapses, affairs the while progressing fairly well, when the castaways are called upon to give welcome to an addition to their little family.

The mother's heart rejoicing over a new-born son, hence overjoyed, as she naturally would be, is overheard in soliloquy:

"Let winter's cold paralyze, summer's heat wither, thorns obstruct, brambles choke, dangers appal! What need I care for them, for I've more than earth? Heaven hath opened wide its portals, sending forth a soul fresh from the Master's hand my lonely pathway to cheer; a being on whom to place my affection, thereby fulfilling the Master's prediction: 'In love of offspring shalt thou find compensation and be comforted.'"

And yet another and no less comforting thought comes to the mother's relief from the fact that with stout heart, steady hand and unwearied effort they are enabled to look upon a wondrous transformation in that the "Wilderness blossoms as the rose," also the promise fulfilled: "Seed time and harvest fail not."

Garments of the fig leaf are no longer in demand, the genial warmth of a lost Paradise giving place to a temperature wherein ice, snow, hail and winter's chilling blasts are prime requisites, and, while the woman has hardly been enabled to clothe herself in garb "not one whit inferior" to the Serpent's promised raiment, the wild beasts, whose dismal howls are heard the long night through awakening the echoes, as roaming in tangled wood and desert wild, are brought into requisition, their soft, furry skins fashioned into garments, uncouth, maybe, yet none the less serviceable, and well adapted to their needs.

Fruits of the pomegranite, nectarine, plum, peach, and even the perverse apple, flourish, yet

only by unceasing toil, unsurpassed skill and thoughtful care, while the more common grains—oats, barley, etc., spring up and grow apace, until reaching maturity, but only by the most wearisome labor, for, unskilled as he is, the faithful husbandman witnesses tares choking, thorns and brambles lending aid, looking to his discomfiture, the utmost and untiring energy scarcely sufficing to clear the way, wherefore, one may be led to the conclusion, that, whereas, the Master never fails in fulfillment of His promises, so does He not in His decrees. Moreover, it almost seems that he on whom the Serpent's mantle fell, i.e., Satan—had taken hold of affairs, for do his best, the hard-earned fruit of the husbandman's labors frequently comes to naught. Heaven's artillery, echoing and vibrating, thunders forth in warning. Lightnings flame, setting the firmament all aglow. All these miseries, disturbing the babe in its cradle, contribute to their dismay, for in the one the Master's angered voice is discerned, the other His fiery breath, hence, the conviction is indulged that His wrath is not one whit abated.

Thus pass days, weeks, months and years. Meanwhile the condition of the new-world colonists improving, experience having been a wise, though stern, teacher, so that now they are in fair way of all their immediate wants being supplied.

The first-born child, having passed through the ills common to childhood, approaches manhood, yet is hardly such an one as the mother's heart craves, for as he grows in growth, so does he in wickedness; in temperament, obstinate, disposition perverse, in character willful, treacherous and of cruel instincts.

The disheartened mother grieves over these unnatural traits, trusting, however, at no distant day she may become parent of one whose nature, more in accord with her own, may in some measure redeem that of the first born from traits so repugnant to her kindly disposition and generous ways.

Thus trusting, hoping and withal, believing, her cherished desire is at last gratified, the measure of her joy filled to overflowing, for she presses to her maternal bosom one whose soft blue eyes reflect back to her own a light of no less excellent character.

This boy also thrives, growing apace, at length reaches manhood, displaying, however, attributes of a far higher order, for in lieu of cruelty, his heart overflows with affection. Manly instincts and generous emotions characterizing his every action therein evidencing to the tender-hearted mother, so, at least, she believes, the primeval curse, so long clinging to their footsteps, is about to be removed. False belief, false delusion! The fond mother has evidently forgotten. The curse, as originally promulgated, is forever to remain a heritage to all who come after.

And now the boys, having grown to the stature of manhood, the family circle having been added to from time to time, it is deemed advisable that other homes be sought.

The two young men, confronted with the proposition, are inclined to demur, but on the father's statement that his limited income will no longer warrant the support of so large a family, the boys finally concur, agreeing to look out for themselves in the future, whereupon arrangements made, the

sons each receive their due share of the estate. Soon after taking their departure, they journey—as once upon a time did their parents—to a far-away country, a goodly number of moons consumed in the undertaking.

Arriving at a region, in every way pleasing, a cabin is erected, a large tract of land surveyed suitable for both grazing and cultivation, in this case of equal importance.

In the father's distribution of his substance, he bestows on his sons flocks of sheep, herds of goats and cattle, altogether a handsome outfit, proving later a source of large revenue.

Household affairs adjusted and all things placed in proper order for settled habitation, that there be no conflicting interests, an equitable division of labor is agreed upon, whereby the elder becomes a tiller of the soil, while the younger brother chooses for occupation the care of the flocks and herds.

As time passes along, both in fair way of realizing their anticipations, it is deemed a matter for congratulation and equally so of right that just recompense be shown for benefits received, so it is mutually agreed that offerings be brought to the Master. The tiller of the soil of the first fruits of his labor; the shepherd, the finest of his flocks; neither for a moment suspecting that the gifts would not be equally well received.

Such, however, was not the case. Indeed, the brothers were doomed to miserable disappointment, for while the offering of the one was gratefully accepted, the other was spurned with contempt—but on what grounds has never been satisfactorily explained—unless the underlying intention was at

fault; that is to say, the elder brother's gift of a selfish nature, while that of the younger was an honest expression of gratitude for benefits received. Be this as it may, the stern fact cannot be controverted that there was a large amount of hatred generated, ungovernable rage the outcome, therefore, the one begins to upbraid the other in terms more vigorous than polite, heaping reproaches on his head in the words, "Why doth the Master accept thy gifts with thanks, while mine are contemptuously spurned? Tell me that, if thou canst?"

"Dost not perceive, or art thou blinded to the fact, that the Master regardeth me with more favor than thou? Why, I am positive, one need not look far in discernment of the reason why the Master prefers my offering to thine, especially, when I am the universally acknowledged favorite," answers the younger brother.

"Possibly thou speakest the truth—fool that thou art!" retorts the elder; then in condemnatory tones, "In that last sentence, thou hast spoken thy death warrant." Then drawing a blunt instrument from under his husbandman's frock, lets fly a terrible blow at his brother's head, who falls stunned and bleeding at his slayer's feet.

Believing the hapless victim merely stunned, he lifts the murderous weapon for the purpose of delivering a second blow, when on the instant, remorse seizes him, his slumbering conscience awakens, he breaks forth in agony of soul, "Alas, alas! I have slain my only companion, my dearly beloved brother! Oh, what shall I do?"

Thus he remains, gazing on the lifeless remains of the victim of his evil passions, his soul tortured

with a remorse that will not down, until at length bethinking himself as to the immediate consequences of his rash act and the disclosure sure to follow, he hastens to remove the body, concealing it in the midst of a dense wood, thinking thereby, to evade the penalty of his rashness, meanwhile, indulging the uncomfortable reflection, "While my brother's dead body remains hidden, what have I to fear, for surely, no one will be the wiser, because so thoroughly concealed; who can find it? Truly a happy thought! Nevertheless, what am I to do? Terrible, it is, to be thus bereft of friend and companion—and he, my only, dearly beloved brother. Slain—yet, 'tis I who have done the deed—and now, alone, oh, that with a word, I could bring him back to life. If only to ask forgiveness. But, alas! 'tis now too late. The deed done, the die cast, I, alone, must abide the consequences."

Thus meditating, his mind fearfully harassed in view of the retribution sure to follow. His heart in contemplation of the terrible deed momentarily growing cold, he is quickly recalled to full realization of the enormity of the crime by hearing the voice that once sent a thrill of horror, piercing the heart of the first created, whose eldest son he is, now, as then, questioning in tones of authority, "Jubal, where is thy brother?"

"Why, Master," in trembling accents the murderer replies, "verily, I've not seen my brother, lo, these many days, nor do I know what has become of him. In very truth, Master, I do not."

"Know not? Indeed, truly a wondrous circumstance, when you were such good friends as to dwell together, never known to be separated only at such

times as he was employed in tending the herds and flocks and you tilling the ground; a most singular state of affairs, surely—yet, once and again I ask—What has become of thy brother?”

“Why, Master, art thou desirous of so terrifying your poor servant; surely the vehemence of your manner is quite enough to set any one crazy accompanied by this useless questioning.” The guilty wretch, still persisting in avowals of innocence, by repeating, “I know not where he hath gone; maybe, some wild beast hath overtaken and slain him. I’ve positively not set eyes on him, nor even hearkened to his voice when calling his flocks and herds for the space of the past three days, and this, Master, is the truth,” all this spoken with the boldest effrontery.

“Wicked, lying, treacherous impostor!” exclaims the indignant Master. “Only too well thou knowest what has become of thy brother; you know too whither he hath gone, and that not of his own free will; on the contrary, he was by thine own hand dragged thither, where thou concealedst his lifeless body, after having stricken him down with a blow from a concealed weapon. Hence, I say, thou, and thou alone, art his murderer, and for this wicked, unjustifiable act, I am constrained to brand thee as such, and lest some person more evil than thou—if such were possible—seek to take thy miserable life in expiation of thy brother’s blood that crieth out from the ground whereon it was shed, I hereby set a seal on thy brow, thus betokening the murderer, that those you chance to meet, will flee thy foul presence, passing thee by unharmed, unheeded; even the beasts of the field, taking cognizance of

thy evil ways—evidenced by the mark—while showing their teeth, will, doubtless, turn tail, leave thee in undisputed possession. Moreover, I would have thee to know, that it is my settled purpose to cause thee to depart from the land which hath been witness to thy crime, for thy presence doth cast a stigma on its fair fame, while thy foul breath doth contaminate the air of any who might chance this way, or inclined to choose habitation hereabout. Go, then, I say, we will have no more of thee.”

For answer, the slayer of his brother cries, “Alas, Master, my punishment is greater than I can bear.”

CHAPTER XIII.

LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME.

EARLY morning of the third day, subsequent to the fatal decree, witnessed the leave taking of the author of a crime unknown at that early stage of the world, and as he departed from a land where so much labor had been performed, such a multitude of privations endured, in effort to establish a home, where happiness had seemed as nearly perfect as earth's mortals have a right to expect, the poor outcast was nearly broken-hearted; nevertheless, from being so suddenly and unexpectedly overtaken and almost overwhelmed by a calamity which might end in his complete downfall, he must from the very necessity of the case seek another, but—where?

Thus pondering, Jubal musters up courage, resolutely setting about repairing his damaged fortunes, resolving also to bury in oblivion thoughts of the past, trusting to the future to banish unavailing regrets, meanwhile, cherish brighter hopes, all of which, he thinks, will tend to a better, possibly, happier life, so gathering about him his flocks and herds, heretofore so zealously watched over and faithfully cared for by his now dead brother, he sets out on prospectively a long and wearisome jour-

ney, for said he, "I will away to some out-of-the-way country, where none shall suspect, none take knowledge of my present place of abode."

Hereafter, quoting his own words, Jubal goes on to say, "Thus journeying, I pursue my lonely, tortuous way, encountering dangers and hardships innumerable, frequently meeting wild beasts, from whose ravages the flocks must be protected; encountering rocky cliffs, within whose darksome recesses lurked the numerous progeny of my parents' relentless enemy, the Serpent; yet coming out of all unharmed, for the seal set on my brow was a mark proclaiming me one to be shunned rather than feared.

"In this manner were my travels prolonged—pressing forward by day, going into camp at night, the herds and flocks furnishing means of subsistence, until, at near the close of the one hundred and twentieth day, my eyes rest on a scene at once inspiring and wondrously astounding, for, away in the distance, rising from out an extended plain, is the burnished dome of a tower, reflecting back the sun's declining rays, thus betokening man's existence and human habitation.

"I hesitate, halt, rub my eyes, gaze anew, then exclaim—sheep and goats my auditors—Am I awake, or am I dreaming? Is this a reality or some hallucination? Nay, this cannot be, my brain is clear, my physical condition never better, yet, again the thought, Do I really, fairly and honestly look upon this—to me unaccountable—scene? The question answered before fairly asked, by appearance of another tower, in height, proportions and general appearance even exceeding the first.

"Structures, as I live! Homes, yes, there they be, in compact, symmetrical groups.

"Doth any wonder that I was bewildered, rather, that I was not bewitched? for how was I to know or even have the remote conception that there were human beings on the face of the earth, other than my father's family?

"Well, understanding that hesitation and self-questioning were of no avail, I take up my staff, call around me my flocks, then resume my journey.

"Now well along in the afternoon, I proceed but slowly, for both my mute companions and myself were well-nigh worn out from long-continued exertion; however, along toward sunset we come to the walls of a town, finding the gates about to be closed, the usual custom on approach of night, as I afterward found.

"Accosting the gate-keeper, I inquire the name of the town.

"The keeper is no less surprised than the one who makes inquiry, for I was positive he had never before looked on the face of a stranger, neither had I beheld a town or any face save those of my father's family. Therefore, it was nothing strange that our surprise was mutual. However, after a few moments' hesitation, he answers my question in the words, 'Good sir, the city you now for the first look upon, is called "Heirut-et-Abal," signifying "an unknown people."'

"Eyeing me with evident suspicion, at the same time manifesting no little uneasiness, for how could it be otherwise when confronted by one who, for aught he knew, had, unheralded, dropped from the skies, for judging from my strange appearance, he

might easily have been led into the error of supposing me an inhabitant of another world. Moreover, my face, from long-continued exposure, was burned and tanned to the consistence of sole-leather, while my uncouth garb of undressed sheep-skin was soiled and torn and, to crown all, 'that everlasting scar.'

"Making my wants known, the worthy keeper and to all appearance a kind-hearted man, bade me enter, and that the flocks might readily pass through, opened wide the gates, and when all was done, closed and securely barred them for the night. Then offering me an arm, escorted me to the principal hostlery of the town, introducing me to the landlord, when, after a few moments' hesitation and questioning of the keeper, I took occasion to request food and lodging for myself and proper care for my weary four-footed friends.

"As one would naturally suppose, the inn-keeper was, if anything, more surprised than had been the gate-keeper. Yet, there was one thing that puzzled me more than all else, and that was, that the tongue spoken by this people was so like my own—a peculiarity, or as one might say, a coincidence, which was afterward accounted for.

"However, I was soon at ease, my generous host inviting me to supper, shortly after which, weary and worn, I retired to rest, sleeping soundly, awaking only at call to breakfast.

"Upon entering the dining-room, the inn-keeper gave me kindly greeting, first asking as to my night's rest, then helped me to food.

"This inn-keeper, in whose house I lodged, and where I was to all appearance an honored guest,

had two daughters, Zilla and Zarilla. The one aged twenty-four, the other twenty.

“Now be it known that I had never in my whole life looked on a female face other than my mother and sisters, therefore, it was nothing strange should I be attracted, bye and bye, falling in love with one or the other of the twain, which in due time proved the elder, Zarilla.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARRIAGE.

"It is hazarding little when making the assertion, that before the bride-elect would consent to the marriage, I was obliged to adopt a style of raiment better suited to my new situation in life, so it came about that I discarded untanned sheepskin for spun and woven garments.

"It is hardly necessary to affirm that this decided change of apparel gave Zarilla much gratification, 'for,' said the amiable girl, 'from an uncommonly fine appearing man, thou art become a veritable god; and why not,' she continues, 'when thy stature exceeds twelve feet?'"

The noteworthy ambition of Jubal could not be said to suffer diminution, on the contrary, it seemed to branch out in a diversity of directions, among which may be reckoned household affairs, inasmuch as it was a common saying "That as the limits of the town were extended, so did his family increase in numbers."

"However," resumes Jubal, "my interests, both of a public and private nature, were so zealously guarded and faithfully attended to that my possessions waxed greater than those of any other. Not only this, but as my riches increased, so did my desire for more, some of my neighbors and fel-

low-townsmen going so far in their righteous indignation, as to declare I not only wanted to accumulate myself, but to deprive my best friends of their hard-earned substance, and this through deeds of violence accompanied by bloodshed, frequently death; all of which I can truthfully affirm, were wholly without foundation.

“Thus it will be readily inferred that a people holding deeds of this character as wholly unworthy of one in my position were now in repentant mood from the fact that in years gone by they had permitted an unscrupulous stranger to settle in their midst. The day was not far distant, however, when present repentance would be swallowed up in joy and thanksgiving, for, aided largely by my efforts the town was in a fair way of becoming so thrifty and populous as to be the envy of all jealous rivals, were there any to be jealous. Moreover, I was becoming so wealthy that I conceived the idea of founding another, so, holding converse with my wife, Zarilla, with that special end in view, I found the estimable lady so well versed in such matters, coupled with a love of gain if anything eclipsing my own, that ’twas an easy matter to bring her round to my way of thinking, that she readily consented to follow whithersoever our mutual preferences might chance to lead; whereupon I commenced at once settling up affairs, to which end I disposed of my landed estates to the best advantage preparatory to gathering together my numerous progeny, selecting the choicest of my flocks and herds, and after all was done I was to journey to a land—as I trusted—never before trod by human foot, for I was determined in this, my

last supreme effort, to outdo anything heretofore attempted, promising myself the building of a city that would eclipse whatsoever might be attempted in the future, as I was positive it would any in the past. And now, before setting out for the long journey, I took occasion to call on my old friend and father-in-law, the inn-keeper, for the special purpose of asking him a simple question, yet one that might have a bearing on my whole future, to wit:

“Good father Ahiel, the question I would ask is this, How comes it that I, not only of the first generation, but also “the First Born,” didst find here a people whose ancestry must antedate my own birth? Surely, good father, ’tis passing strange, and I cannot in any manner comprehend its meaning?”

“For answer the inn-keeper returns: ‘Know ye not, my son, Jubal, that thou and they of thine own kin who have come after thee have, lo, these many generations labored under grievous mistake in this, that, while thou doth consider thyself the first born, thou art not, because, long before thine eyes were opened to the light, thy father was the sire of two children—a son and a daughter—who, for some cause or other, took their departure from the primeval garden, journeying for the space of many moons; finally seeking an abiding place so far distant from the old home as to render it a matter of doubt if their retreat was ever discovered; so you see, Jubal, I, instead of thou, am of the first generation. as my grandfather, were he in the flesh, could testify; nor could he be far from the prime of life, that is to say, in his six hundred

and fifty-seventh year. My mother, however, is still in the flesh, as thou hast frequently seen, thinking her an elderly maiden, though at the present time, something like six hundred and twenty-five years of age.

“‘Jubal, thy parents still live, so I have lately learned, and your father, Orimentes, could, were he so minded, corroborate the story I’ve told you.

“‘I am well pleased, my son, that thou wert inspired to ask these questions because they are so intimately connected with thy ancestry, and may have an important bearing on thy posterity.

“‘Doth my answer satisfy thee, Jubal?’

“‘Aye, better by far than it pleaseth me, for to them that come after it augureth but ill; nevertheless, I must submit to a decree, while not of my own choosing, is no doubt just, yet hard to bear, as you must admit. ’Tis a strange tale, indeed, passing strange, yet knowing thee to be a man of honor and integrity, I cannot dispute it.’

“I take the aged patriarch’s hand in farewell, then haste to my waiting family, setting out on a journey that consumed no less than ninety and five days’ continuous travel, meanwhile subject to hardships innumerable, incident to an untrod, hitherto unknown wilderness, harassed by attacks from wild beasts, ever and anon startled by angry hissings of the ancient enemy, ‘the Serpent,’ whose forked tongue was none the less in readiness to attack friend or foe than when beguiling my father and mother in the Garden of Eden. Thus journeying, we at length reach a point pleasing to the eye, and in appearance well adapted to the object sought, viz., permanent habitation, there-

upon settling down in prelude to the building of the contemplated city, which, it is safe to say, when completed outranked the one from which in the long ago we departed—a city whose walls tower high above all surrounding objects, within whose gates were structures of the most perfect symmetry and utmost solidity, tapering spires, heavenward pointed, proclaiming ‘the fact of many gods’—for I believed the Master only one of the many. This city, as I say, was named after my eldest son, accordingly flourishing uncommonly well, and that stood for many long centuries, a monument to the eminent builder, Jubal. As some were wont to affirm, ‘A monument transcending my immoderate ambition for fame, likewise built at the expense of many a poor toiler, who reaped neither fame nor wealth.’ But then people will be envious, and who shall blame them? Not I.”

Saith a contemporary of Jubal: “Many and oft were the strange scenes enacted therein, many a cold-blooded crime committed, for this was an epoch when might made right, and when strange gods were worshipped.”

Here, too, were to be seen gardens in mid-air, hanging from the housetop or walls erected for the special purpose, wherein flourished all manner of plants and creeping things, even the hated apple, along with flowering plants and shrubs of every known species, while fountains from which flowed crystal waters, were to be seen in all directions.

The family of Jubal also flourished, increasing in numbers so rapidly that colonies were sent forth for the purpose of settling new countries, founding cities, until the passage of time saw nearly the

entire habitable globe thickly peopled. Yet as the population of the different countries and cities increased, so did the people become wicked, until out of patience, the Master repented He had made man, ultimately coming to the conclusion 'twere better to sweep the entire race off the face of the earth.

At the time my brother met his untimely fate, my father, Orimentes, was two hundred and thirty years of age, living thereafter seven hundred years, and during this somewhat lengthy period of existence became the father of thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters.

Now, among this large number of sons was one especially noteworthy, in that he was an uncommonly upright man, his character largely resembling that of his mother, Orimentides, while the others were more like their father.

This kindly disposed young man, like many another, took unto himself a wife, and, as in the case of his father, became sire to a numerous progeny who inherited the virtues of their father, yet as time passed along, each succeeding generation became more and more deeply imbued with an insatiable desire for riches, at the same time looking after those things having a tendency to demoralize their character.

In this unsatisfactory manner passed the long period of two thousand years, the world meantime becoming more densely populated until at length there came on the stage one Aristides, at the time of which we speak in his six hundredth year. It was also about this period of the world's history the Master conceived the project of destroy-

ing every living creature. However, not wishing to deal unjustly with those He had been the cause of bringing into existence, the Master cast about, finally coming upon Aristides, who, on inquiry, was found closely resembling his remote ancestor in those attributes most essential to the common walks of life, viz., an estimable character, virtuous inclination, allied with integrity.

CHAPTER XV.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE MASTER AND ARISTIDES.

PLANS decided upon and all arrangements made looking to early completion of the work, and Aristides was summoned for consultation, the Master opening the interview as follows:

“Aristides, it hath become my settled purpose to adjudge all that hath life to destruction, for I will not henceforth allow root nor branch to cumber the ground; not only this, but I will curse the very ground on which they walk. Dost ask why? Because my laws are habitually broken, my precepts set at naught and nothing I can say, commands, entreaty even, are not heeded, for which cause wickedness is on the increase, arts and stratagems are concocted whereby the innocent are made to suffer for the guilty, and as I can see no other course available, no punishment of lesser degree adequate to the emergency, I am fully determined to carry the aforesaid decree into effect.

“Discerning in thee a character free from guile, thy every act in accordance with my desires, I hereby make thee an exception, thou and thy family, to which end I will give thee all necessary instructions in regard to certain measures, which if adopted and carried out, will redound to thy credit and largely contribute to thy safety.

"Now, Aristides, attend closely to what I am about to say, for I am delegating to thee an unwonted trust—a trust, as I may say, that no other human being, however lofty his station, or of how much wealth, can in any wise lay claim, or if so, would receive no attention. But to the point: Aristides, you will at once proceed to plan for a vessel of strength adequate to the sustainment of a pressure of the elements, which I will allow full sway, also of sufficient capacity to bear thyself, thy family, and a pair each of beast, bird and fowl, together with subsistence for all, as it has become obligatory on me to bring down the rains from heaven until the surface of the earth shall be inundated to the depth of fifteen cubits, the waters to begin falling on the seventh month, and the twenty-seventh day thereof, thus without cessation continuing for the space of forty days thereafter."

"Well, but, Master," expostulates Aristides, "how will it be possible to do this thing thou dost command, for I can in no wise conceive how a structure of the size thou doth suggest can be constructed."

"All things are possible if thou dost but attend to and carry out my instructions.

"The vessel I hereby counsel thee to build must in extreme length be three hundred cubits, in height thirty cubits, fifty in breadth. The whole to be divided into four stories.

"See to it thou do all things as I have commanded, so that at the supreme moment when the earth shall be swallowed in one grand abyss of seething waters nothing shall be found wanting."

In the year two thousand and four was set the day for the appearance of the flood, and subsistence for man and beast is received daily and consigned to the hold or lower deck. About this time Aristides begins to be considerably worried, fearing there will be hardly storage room for so large a number of animals. That there must of necessity be more or less overcrowding is a foregone conclusion; however, bestirring himself, and bearing in mind the Master's promise, he gives no further heed to the matter, simply reaffirming what had at one time been said: "The Master doeth all things well."

The arrival of the unique cavalcade is now daily looked for, and the morning of the twenty-seventh, a lookout stationed on an eminence hard by, reported a dense cloud of dust in the distance, so, announcing the fact, Aristides appears on the scene, notebook in hand, and it was not long before the head of the column emerged from out the stifling clouds and approached at slow gait, indicative of being nearly worn out from long-continued travel, for the motley troupe had been on the road many long, wearisome months.

In lead of the multitudinous array, stretching away to the rear and farther than the eye could reach, was to be seen the stately mastodon and mate, a pair of monstrous elephants, together with representatives of the entire animal world, while a lengthy train of wheeled vehicles, wherein were the feathered tribes, among which were the great roc, eagle, ostrich, and a host of lesser degree, while at the top of one of the larger carriages, basking under the sun's heated rays, eyes glitter-

ing in their intensity, at the same time taking in all objects worthy of note, lay outstretched an enormous serpent. The entire cavalcade, from their listless attitude, evidencing a long-continued period of painful travel.

The shades of night draw near. The wearied keepers having supplied their mute guests with all things needful for their bodily wants, lie down to rest—mute guests? and themselves to rest? Nay, this can hardly be said when one listens to the multitude of discordant sounds, among which are heard the fierce cries of the birds of prey, roar of lion, bray of ass, trumpeting of the lordly elephant, and a thousand and one no less inharmonious sounds, to say nothing of the great serpent's hissing plaint consequent on bonds no more relished than would be the captive screaming eagle, as soaring on high, he looks down in seeming ridicule on the human biped, crawling beneath.

As all things have an ending, so does the night, and ere the weary travelers have hardly closed their eyes in slumber, the trumpet's shrill blare calls them to arise, for on this day the Ark's living freight must be on board.

Camp aroused, animals fed, breakfast eaten. Thus, all things in readiness, embarkation begins, and as the sun reaches the meridian the work is well advanced, continuing without cessation forty and eight hours.

And now a strange thing happens, for while embarkation is in progress, or nearly ended, the tenant of the only remaining vehicle to be transferred on board ship—an enormous sea serpent, not known as such at the time, having been taken a

long way inland—was in the act of being hoisted on deck, the tackling gave way, precipitating vehicle, serpent and all to the dock below. The ferocious beast, as was but natural, attacked the one nearest, which proved to be Aristides' eldest son, delivering a blow fairly on the young man's face. Whereupon, by some occult or other mysterious influence, the skin was changed to shiny black; hair became of the texture and semblance of wool, the usually thin lips were swelled to inordinate proportions; yet more singular than all else, skin, hair and lips of his posterity have so remained from that to this, with no prospect of change.

Embarkation at last finished, Aristides, his family, beasts of all sorts on board, in addition to subsistence, thus all in readiness for fulfillment of a decree whereon rests a world's destiny: The usually calm spirits of Aristides have risen to an unwonted height; not that he would offer congratulations in that the world is on the eve of destruction, but because the welfare of those he holds most dear is assured.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DELUGE, AS TOLD BY THE HISTRIOGRAPHER,
JUBAL.

THE prophetic night passes, its darkening shades disappear, some seeking forgetfulness in quiet slumber; others, disturbed by visions of coming disaster, look on the prophecy as they may, regard Aristides' saying as they will, forebodings of evil weigh heavily upon them. Meanwhile the aged patriarch, in all the serenity of conscious well doing, surrounded by his anxious family, disturbed as his slumbers undoubtedly are, preserves an outwardly calm demeanor. Yet inwardly troubled, for he alone can fully appreciate the perils in store, for friends, neighbors and the whole world alike, all are to suffer the fulfillment of the prophecy now so near at hand, for the edict promulgated and now about to be put to the test is, in Aristides' mind, a foregone conclusion.

The day breaks, succeeded by the beams of the rising sun; yet to the most careless onlooker presents a strange, weird aspect. But hark! What means this tumultuous uprising? They who went to their beds on yesterday night in full assurance their fears were without foundation, now rise in haste, fright urging them onward, as pale, trem-

bling, heavy of heart, they congregate, each alike contributing to the other's dismay.

The whole world is in like mood, and ere the dial marks the hour of ten the sun has entirely disappeared; not a shred of blue above, not a ray of sunlight beneath; all one dark, deepening mass of stony gray, while over and above, obscuring all, rises a deep, impenetrable mist. Friend loseth sight of friend; husband of wife; servant his master; mother of her child, for no eye can penetrate the ever-deepening gloom.

Suddenly from out the firmament, crashing, thundering, echoing from zone to zone, comes a deafening roar, preceded by flashing, blinding flame, altogether suggestive of the downfall of the race, human and brute alike, for in all their ungovernable rage the winds arise, and as they gather, sweep o'er land and sea in one long, intermittent shriek of despair.

Overtaken by the furious blast, the lofty palm, wide-spreading oak and towering cedar fall crashing to the earth.

Ocean beds are laid bare, rivers run dry, seas become mere lakes, lakes pools, the loftiest structures are torn from their foundations, their former sites swept away forever, thus becoming a thing of the past. Yet this is but the beginning, the prelude of that to come after, for soon the casements of heaven are loosed; they fly open, the downpour begins; the parched earth eagerly drinks in the flood. Its thirst quenched, the whole earth's surface presents one unbroken glare of water, and now the floods gather, pools fill, the most insignificant streams grow and increase in volume;

plains and low-lying valleys become lakes, they in turn enlarge to seas, while the air is choked in the monotonous roar of cataract and waterfall. The lesser hills are peopled with anxious, excited groups, others haste up the broken declivities, bearing in their hands gold, silver and other precious metals; broad shoulders groan under the burden of household effects.

Anon the waters rise. The low-lying hills barely sufficing, higher elevations are sought, these in turn engulfed, the cry goes up: "To the mountains!"

And now raft-like makeshifts are brought into requisition whereon multitudes seek safety; vessels originally constructed for the transportation of wild beasts on their long journeyings to the Ark are also utilized, their occupants thus hoping to avert the dread calamity. The strongest and most thoroughly constructed strongholds crumble, thereby vast multitudes being overthrown, falling from the battlements above to the surging waters beneath. Mountain sides are climbed, their tops reached; then up, and still upward, till the highest peaks are scaled. Yet of what avail? For it is but a little time when even these are engulfed.

Meanwhile from out wood and jungle, beasts of whatsoever species or degree haste to the mountains. The tiger, lion, bear, leopard, these the most ferocious of all,—crouch at their inveterate foes' feet, lick the hand so often raised to strike them down,—then in mute appeal gaze in the eyes of their heretofore bitter foes, urging succor; all enmities on their part forgotten, thus all fear of

human face and form giving way before the more imminent one of impending calamity.

Now seas burst their bonds, oceans overflow their bounds. The entire face of the earth is overwhelmed in one vast bed of seething waters. Trees upturned, freighted with human woe, as borne along, they sway back and forth. They even jostle the Ark's towering walls, their fear-stricken lodgers, in ear-piercing accents and agonized tones, cry aloud for help. The once despised craft has in very truth become an ark of refuge.

Wild beasts, too, are there. Their terrified howls, and fierce cries, mingling with those of their horrified human neighbors, all now on a level, death staring each alike in the face—their lifeless bodies soon to roll and toss on the bosom of the "great deep" only, at the last to be swallowed up in the depths of the remorseless flood.

Anon, a low, indistinct, monotonous rumbling, increasing in intensity, and augmenting in volume until the very heavens are choked with the roar, breaks on the ear. Undermined yon mountain has succumbed to the fierce onslaught, disappearing beneath the tumultuous waters.

Leagues of forest stretching away in the far distance in an unbroken wood, fall twisted and torn. Their roots like unto human fingers raise themselves on high in mute appeal to stay the oncoming flood.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARK'S LIVING FREIGHT.

'Twas for the space of forty days and forty nights the casements of heaven remained unclosed. Therefrom proceeding one incessant, unremittant downpour, all vestige of life, save the Ark's living freight and the fishes in the sea, utterly, irretrievably wiped out of existence, and aside from these the earth was as at the beginning. Still the flood continues, yet it is not to be presumed Aristides and his family remained idle spectators of these strange, unwonted scenes; nay, for their time was fully occupied in caring for and supplying the needs of the immense herd of beasts entrusted to their charge, for in the safety of these hinge a world's fate. Whence, 'tis safe to say, that no similar task was ever before delegated to mortal man. As, however, the responsibilities were of uncommon magnitude, so, in like manner were the resources unequalled, and so long as the Master was at the fore, so long would his energetic Lieutenant Aristides harbor no fears respecting the outcome. But what a tremendous undertaking! This providing food for the vast aggregation of beast, bird, and fowl, some subsisting on the various sorts of grain, hay and straw, others, fruits, and vegetables, while the wild beasts with their ravenous nature would be

satisfied with nothing less than animal flesh,—whether of human or brute, it mattered little which—and when one stops for a moment to consider the difficulties lying in the way it is certainly a matter of wonder, peradventure, subject for speculation as to the manner wherewith all could be fed with the amount and kinds of food as indicated; yet, in the absence of direct proof it must perforce be taken for granted, for we are assured that all came forth from the Ark in good condition, and at the stipulated time.

On the evening of the fortieth day the windows of heaven are closed. The rains cease falling. The angry clouds disappear. The thunder roll is heard no more, nor does the lightning flash blind the eyes of this family who have weathered the storms prevailing for the past forty days, and now, as the last vestige of the storm cloud gives way, retiring before the enlivening beams of the declining sun, thus disclosing bright skies above, below, naught but the Ark's staunch walls, the brave ship riding safely on the bosom of the late tumultuous waters.

The once despised craft has borne up against the raging elements, not a timber shattered, no rib, or plank wanting, for notwithstanding the rough weather encountered, the Ark has withstood all, coming out of the fray with unbroken harness, unconquered, unstained honor even, and if needs must, ready for another encounter.

To this, however, the great captain takes little heed; for, the elemental forces conquered, the storm subdued, the rebellious hosts silenced, beaten, fleeing the field, utterly routed, no root, nor branch, bearing evidence of the struggle, no

one indeed left to tell the tale. Therefore, Aristides has good reason to believe the Master's wrath appeased; meantime, having done his whole duty, he has equally good reason to be satisfied, as hath the Master. And now a long and anxious period of suspense accentuated by weary waiting, supervenes.

The moon waxeth and waneth. The great eye of day looks down on a world bereft of its former wealth and grandeur; where once was splendor, glory and happiness, now, naught but silence, and death. And yet the orb of day moves its appointed rounds. The sister planets illumine with their former pristine brilliancy, for there are no more rains, no floods, lightning flame nor thunder boom, no storm, nor tempest, on the contrary, all is serene. The Master's wrath not only abated but entirely quenched.

Five moons now elapse, the waters gradually subsiding, when upon examination the ship is found fast aground, and not long thereafter land appears. "But where?"—a thought deeply agitating the mind of Aristides, for destitute of chart or compass it is impossible to determine his whereabouts, hence there was evidently but one course applicable to the situation, and that was to wait, for if even he were in possession of the means necessary to navigate it would be sheer nonsense to make the attempt, for the world's seaports were as "in the beginning."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISEMBARKING FROM THE ARK.

BIDING his time, Aristides waits other five days, then throws the window open and makes observation, but sees nothing but a little strip of land as before. However, as yet not entirely convinced, he hits on the novel expedient of sending a raven in quest, but 'tis not long when the bird returns, having found no place whereon to rest its feet.

Again Aristides waits other seven days, and so thoroughly convinced is he that the waters have abated sufficient to effect a landing, that he sends forth a dove. Joy! joy! This bird also returns, but not empty handed, for it holds in its beak an olive branch. Now on every hand may be seen dry land, yet, in order there be no mistake he remains yet seven days, then throws wide open the gates, whereupon the Ark dwellers draw a long pent-up breath of relief, the foul air within giving place to the invigorating atmosphere from without.

Disembarkment is at once begun and prosecuted with so much vigor that soon the mighty mastodon and mate come forth, followed by the other beasts according to degree. Thus the long array, wherein are comprised beast, bird and fowl, file out along the gangway to solid ground, until the great ship

is cleared of all save "His Majesty," in all the glittering panoply of shining skin, hooded crest and danger signal, hissing in very spite that he should be the one to bring up the rear, rather than as guard of honor in the van, for the monster, even at this late day, fails not in remembrance to whom he is indebted for the original downfall, nor does he intend to apologize for betraying his trust at the supreme moment when a world's fate hung in the balance, and now deeming himself in the line of ancient ancestry, hence of great renown and becoming style, he comes, the notorious enemy of the human race, notably the fairest portion—"The Serpent."

Aristides, the noted ship builder and skilled navigator, as he will ever be known, not because of original discovery, but rather that he has re-peopled a "New World," therefore entitled to honors accordingly,—he, too, comes forth at the head of his estimable family, all in an ecstasy of delight upon once more breathing the fresh air. Disembarkation at length finished, the beasts are secured, temporary quarters allotted on ground so lately submerged, the wondrously fashioned Ark, wherein they have been so long held prisoners, standing for all time as a monument, not to Aristides' stupidity, as was at one time asserted, but in evidence of his hearkening to and obeying the Master's edict.

True, the brown earth is here, but utterly bereft of life. Not the most remote sign of vegetation, no lofty palm, no high, towering cedar, nor wide-spreading oak; no bush, nor shrub; nor is there mountain height to be seen. On the contrary,

one wide, lonely, monotonous, dreary blank, and to make the outlook more disheartening, were that possible, the ground as far as one can see is cumbered with lifeless forms, human and brute side by side, else commingled in indiscriminate confusion; bloated, festering, fast decaying under the sun's heated rays; nevertheless—from some unknown cause—no stench in the least offensive rises therefrom. But there is much to be done, therefore annoyances of whatsoever nature or source, must be made as light of as circumstances will permit.

Aristides now calls the family together in council, looking to the future, and as a first step toward resettling the world, parcels out to the sons the several divisions of the globe, of course having due regard to their individual tastes as to their occupations. So to one he gives the whole of Asia, to another Europe, while to the third, and, as will be remembered, the victim of the Serpent's wrath, whereby his skin was transformed to the hue of ebony, he presents the entire region of Africa, within the boundaries of which are to be found in countless millions his descendants, not one whit less dark than their illustrious predecessor and remote ancestor.

This unique family is about to engage in a marvellous undertaking—the re-conquering, re-stocking, and last, but not least, re-peopling a world from whence has been eliminated all that once was, and while wild beasts will no more stand in the way, no hostile foes encountered, Nature's forces must, from the very nature of things, be subdued.

Haste, too, must be made, for the Ark's capacious storehouse is rapidly undergoing depletion, so, cast-

ing about in order that steps be taken to meet the emergency—for as things now stand famine is imminent—Aristides is startled beyond measure, for right before him stands a strange apparition in the person of an aged pilgrim whose stature is not less than eleven feet, hair and beard of snowy whiteness, while plainly marked on his brow is a “deep red scar.”

Lifting up his voice in tones savoring of anxiety, he speaks: “Friend Aristides, thy mind seems at unrest on some weighty subject, wherefore, know thou that I am one dispatched by the Master to inform you that borrowing trouble, either on account of thy family or future prospects, is entirely useless, for in the matter of subsistence, which I plainly discern gives thee much uneasiness, indulge no further concern, for everything thou needest will be furnished in full supply.” Saying which, he immediately disappears.

“Amazing in conception and marvellous of execution are the Master’s works,” piously ejaculates Aristides, then casts his eyes aloft in appeal for the higher powers to solve the mystery.

When retiring for the night on this, the close of the third day subsequent to disembarkation, no change of scene, as connected with Nature’s doings, was apparent. The same dark brown earth; no mountain height, no hill or other elevation of whatsoever nature to break the monotony of the landscape, nor was there the most insignificant sign of vegetation to relieve apprehension of coming want; in short, all was one dull, sickening, unromantic blank.

But what a startling change one short night hath

wrought! and who can in the least imagine the delight consequent on the early morning's disclosures? For in lieu of a dull, gloomy brown, the earth is carpeted with a mantle of brilliant green. Instead of an unbroken, monotonous, unrelieved plain, the eye rests on, and the heart is delighted upon witnessing, these splendid tokens of the Master's forethought, for spread in luxurious abundance right before them are fields of corn waving in the gentle breeze and nearly ready for the harvest, while each bush, tree and flower is loaded with Nature's choicest productions. Whereupon in the fullness of his joy, Aristides breaks forth: "In no wise doth the Master's promises fail in fulfillment."

Thus was for all time set at rest the question as to subsistence, doubtings heretofore indulged giving way to confidence and hope. Thus encouraged the future colonists immediately set to work, putting forth every energy in preparing for early departure, the morning of the fifth day to witness leave taking, so at the appointed hour each of the settlers is to be seen in lead of a column, wherein are the separate species of animals indigenous to the clime to which each is apportioned while making his way along the dusty highway, else riding on an elephant or mastodon's back as self-interest may dictate or convenience warrant, may be seen our once while friend and coadjutor, "The Serpent." Yet, riding or crawling, he is the same enemy to human kind as when cast out from his olden time high estate, companion and friend to earth's only and fairest daughter, he essayed first to captivate, then dethrone the first created

of all human beings, in both of which the venomous beast was eminently successful. But now every hand is raised in anger against him, even the beast of the field shunning his hateful presence, and why not, when from his wicked ways he has become the meanest of all created objects; nevertheless, be this as it may, "His Royal Highness" would infinitely prefer as a habitation some out-of-the-way mountain fastness, whereunto the reptile's notorious ancestor was, by fiat of the Master, originally banished.

Thus, in three parallel columns they advance, halting now and then for rest and refreshment, until at length, after many days, weeks and months of wearisome travel, a junction is formed on the plains of a distant part of the land, where they dwell for a lengthy period of years, sons and daughters meantime born to them, who, arriving at mature age, strike out for themselves, going forth to found other colonies, settling new portions of the eminent domain originally partitioned off to them by their grandsire. Aristides, so it is fair to presume the earth will, in due time, be again peopled; anyhow, such was the decision of the eminent historian Jubal.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONSULTATION RELATIVE TO A TOWER.

THE passage of years brings Aristides both sons and daughters, numbering altogether sixteen, among whom was one who became sire of a most remarkable character. This son, commonly esteemed a bold, and in many ways, bad man, was possessed of uncommon strength, many of his friends and ardent admirers going so far in their avowals of praise as to bestow on him the compliment of a "veritable giant," others jealous of his growing reputation were in the habit of stigmatizing him as "a much overrated character," while everybody was willing to concede to him all that he himself claimed, viz., "a well-meaning man." Nevertheless, in order to maintain his constantly augmenting prestige, he was quite willing to ascribe his more notable deeds to his own unaided efforts, foresight, and above all, courage, rather than to the good offices of the gods, maintaining it a piece of sheer cowardice to lay one's good fortune at the door of supernal powers. "Why," says he, "rather give yourselves credit for your valiant deeds, and to me, praise, as their author. Furthermore, ye well know, or if not, ye can consult the records for confirmation, that in the days of my great-grand sire, Aristides, there was a wondrous flood,

whereby the whole world was inundated and every living thing swept off from its surface. Moreover, through wisdom and foresight combined—forecast of the gods many averred, though Aristides maintained 'twas at command of the Master—a craft of enormous size, wondrously constructed and of vast capacity, under the cognomen of 'Ark,' was launched and provisioned for a lengthy cruise, and within this selfsame vessel were stowed a pair each of all the animal kingdom, besides Aristides and family, all of whom were preserved, and of whose descendants you and I are. Now, as a far-seeing man, and one who takes nothing on trust, I put it to you, at the same time I am willing to stake my hard-earned reputation that it was by the superior wisdom of my illustrious ancestor that measures were adopted and successfully carried out whereby the casualty was in his case averted, no matter what happened to others; moreover, it must be conceded that whatsoever has at one time occurred, may, peradventure, take place again, whence I am minded to estimate it a bounden duty to advise a similar course in order to avert other disasters of like nature.

"My friends," he continues, "let us erect a structure of height adequate to preclude the necessity of that floating affair denominated 'Ark,' in which event we will be enabled to rise above the reach of floods, deluge as they may; then the clouds may well stand aghast when looking on a column overtopping even their dizzy heights. Again, should fire be the destroying agent, we will circumvent that powerful element, for we will build of stone, or possibly brick, either of which will answer our

purpose, inasmuch as both alike are impervious to the action of fire and water, therefore, seethe as it may on the one hand, deluge as it will on the other, we shall be out of reach of both.

"What, my friends, have ye to offer in contradiction to the scheme?"

"Why," says one, "'tis so affirmed the Master hath set a bow in the clouds for the express purpose of preventing further floods or anything thereto pertaining."

"Bow in the clouds, indeed," quoth Abiram. "What do ye think a foolish bow or any other sign can do to prevent the rains from falling when so minded? Nay, nay, friends, be not deceived by these simple tales, for I do assure you 'twas but a ruse to relieve the mind of our worthy ancestor, Aristides, who, as I've been told, was constantly tormented by the thought that the Master, as he denominated his one god, might possibly again see fit to bring a similar disaster on the world."

"The deception practiced on the poor man, harmless, no doubt, in connection with the delusion that followed him to his grave, had the desired effect, for his mind was ever after set at rest, but methinks this topic has little enough to do with our present affairs, wherefore I again ask, What think ye of the scheme?"

The question so adroitly put, the reasoning so conclusive, brought the entire assemblage to terms, so, with a single exception, all responded: "Aye, aye, worthy citizen Abiram, 'tis naught but the truth thou dost speak."

To bind the people still firmer to the compact Abiram continues thus: "Ye have heard them well

grounded in the law assert, likewise so do the ancient records testify, 'that the realms of Paradise are directly above the firmament, the one the floor of the other.' Now, do ye, my friends, understand the gist of my reasoning? If so, then will ye also understand that should the contemplated structure rise to the desired height, what's to hinder one from stepping from the highest pinnacle of the one to the very entrance gates of the other?"

At the close of Citizen Abiram's address shouts of approval rose from all sides, the cry going up, "Long live Citizen Abiram!" And no wonder, when his specious arguments having carried the day, all opposition was at once swept away, thus at the outset assuring the good will and hearty co-operation of the entire community, who evidently foresaw in the carrying out of the project an easy and direct way of reaching Paradise. Truly a mighty enterprise, this erecting a tower computed to extend upward until heaven's gates were reached, and so confident was Abiram of success and so full of enthusiasm his followers and prospective coadjutors, that few misgivings were harbored as to the result.

CHAPTER XX.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE TOWER.

THE populace agreed, and all things in readiness, operations were commenced by dispatching messengers throughout the length and breadth of the land for the purpose of summoning architects of well-known ability, also skilled artisans in their individual lines of work, the one to prepare plans and models, the others to put them in execution; while the everyday laborers, in the aggregate many thousands, to be employed, it being declared on all sides that a project of such stupendous magnitude had never before entered the mind of man, nor was one of like importance ever delegated to mortal, nor was one likely to be projected. Therefore, the earlier the task was entered upon the better for all parties concerned, as, said one, "the popular feeling evidently runs in the direction of some overwhelming convulsion of nature," but, were the truth known, this was of secondary importance compared with that of being able to reach Paradise by an easy and comfortable route.

Considerations of this nature being uppermost in the minds of the people, it was an easy matter to raise funds, so, on solicitation, vast sums were subscribed to the building fund, for the fame of the great leader was of such wide extent, his

capability so well established, that no one hesitated to comply with the proposed terms, while enthusiasm ran so high, it might be said, unbounded, that the treasury was nigh to overflowing with gold, silver and letters of credit.

Notwithstanding the alacrity wherewith response to the call was made, more or less delay was experienced consequent on limited means of transportation, nevertheless, a considerable number of architects, artisans and laborers appear prepared for operations, whereupon a consultation was held, first, to determine the particular style of architecture; second, material best adapted to the work of erecting a structure wherein solidity was obviously a prime requisite.

A considerable amount of discussion involved, arguments pro and con adduced, and it was at length determined to employ granite for the substructure, while for the tower proper unburned brick was to be employed, the whole cemented with bitumen.

The next consideration being the size and shape of the building. After further discussion it was resolved that the form should be conical, divided into separate stories, according to the height, this latter point of noteworthy importance, and to be determined only after the work had sufficiently progressed. "For," said Abiram, "we know not how far heaven be above us, therefore I consider it the wiser plan to leave that important affair unsettled for the present."

Along the outer walls was to rise a winding staircase extending from base to summit, a certain number of windows to each story. Thus, the scheme

inaugurated, is pushed with the utmost vigor compatible with the excellence of the work. Huge blocks of granite cut from the mountain side and loaded on stout carts drawn by long trains of bullocks and camels were hauled to the site selected, while brick by the thousand are turned out daily, and thus without let or hindrance the work goes bravely on until the structure has reached to the height of one story above the base.

Thus, without cessation, the work continues until the structure has reached the enormous height of two hundred and seventy-five feet, the lengthy period of forty years already consumed, but never a thought of relinquishing or for a moment halting, inasmuch as the battlements of heaven, according to the general estimate, are almost in sight.

Who shall describe, or attempt description of a structure built as was this, of solid masonry, its proportions of the utmost symmetry, in height nearly reaching the skies, a broad and easy stairway circling the outer walls from base to summit, windows from all sides affording an unbroken outlook, gaze from which ever direction one may; in short, a monument witnessing to the skill of architects and artisans in conjunction with the unequalled, untiring energy of the master spirit, unsurpassed, unapproachable of all concerned.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONFUSION OF TONGUES.

CLOSELY approaching nightfall, on this, the last day, work meantime having progressed both rapidly and satisfactorily, the twelfth story so nearly finished as to require but a single tier of brick, and architects, contractors, foremen, laborers, all return to camp amid a scene of general rejoicing from the fact that the present outlook is uncommonly favorable for speedy cessation of the work, it being understood that all labor will cease until the commencement of another year, the main reason for this course of action lying in the fact that funds are running low, the treasury nearly empty. Word, however, lately received, indicates that large sums of money will be forthcoming on the first day of the new year, some eight months hence, furthermore, a general state of good feeling prevails just now, owing to the fact that all have been paid their wages in full, amounting to no inconsiderable sum; hence, as they gather about the board in interest of the evening meal, the word goes round: "No more work after the close of the month."

Little wonder then all should be found in amiable mood, largely intensified by the reflection that

their homes, many of them far distant, will ere long overflow with happiness consequent on well-filled pockets, sure sesame to generous opening of hearts and warm welcome.

The labors of the day ended, Abiram repairs to his luxurious home, situated a little distance away on a beautiful prominence near the outskirts of the town, and now that everything has gone so well, his inmost thoughts outwardly displayed, an uncommonly cheerful demeanor lending an additional charm to his naturally composed features, for he has gained a name, and if all comes out well, honors will flow in upon him without stint; indeed, the proudest of all the earth's most renowned monarchs may well cry aloud in envy, for he has outstripped them all in the race for glory.

Noticing Abiram's happy mood, his wife goes out to meet him, and, should there be gratifying news in connection with his manifold labors, congratulate him, so she solicitously inquires the cause for this apparent change from his usual calm, some might call it stern, demeanor, to one so light and cheerful? Whereupon he answers: "Know ye not, Jerusha, that our work in nearing completion reveals from the prodigious height attained, the domes, minarets, spires, and I don't know but I might be justified in saying even the battlement of heaven? And I much misdoubt if the pearly gates of Paradise be not at this moment put in order in anticipation of our arrival. But, Jerusha, I would to the table, for I am well nigh onto famishing, and after my bodily wants are attended to I will to my couch, for the morrow's sun must not find me in bed, as there is much to be done in

anticipation of cessation of work. Again, I am fully determined on awarding my faithful coadjutors a period of rest commensurate with the amount of their labors, to which, I am positive, no one will deny their right, and to which they, as well as myself, are entitled. Forty years of continuous application, Jerusha, should, I am positive, suffice for the first bout, after which comes the supreme struggle, when it is fair to presume, the great tower will have been finished, yet, at the best, a half moon must be consumed in the completing of the present work; then for rest."

The great Abiram now gives himself up to the good things set before him, enjoying them as he has not done since the beginning of the work, for his mind has been so preoccupied that the pleasures of the table were of secondary importance, so, after finishing his supper, he repairs to his couch in expectant slumber, peradventure to see visions; nevertheless stern realities are ere long to stare him in the face, in comparison to which dreams and visions are naught but shadows.

All unconscious of the multitude of strange sounds common to a great encampment, the ambitious man sleeps, giving no thought to the menacing troubles in active preparation, and about to break on his unconscious head, for were he but knowing to the truth he would at once take measures to avoid the calamity that the morrow's sun would look down upon. Aye, a spectacle wholly unanticipated, unlooked, unprepared for. .

Anon the trumpet blast, and the scarcely rested multitude of heroic workers rise from their beds, partake of a hurried breakfast, then up and away

to their accustomed daily toil. And now from the direction of his not far distant home appears Abiram. He passes along until he at length notices one of the principal contractors, who, on approach, returns the kindly greeting to his chief, then, in relation to some minor affair pertaining to his official duties, essays speech.

Imagine the surprise depicted on the face of Abiram, for on his employee opening his mouth, prefacing his speech, words without let or hindrance flow therefrom, but of what avail? for to the chief they are but so much gibberish.

In the belief that some joke was being played upon him, Abiram in angered tones cries: "Go to, Azael! Why address thy chief in this unseemly manner? Why essay speech in this outlandish gibberish? Doth not the Hebrew, thy mother tongue, suffice, that thou must needs concoct thy hideous jokes? Desist, I beg, and take heed hereafter to thy ways, else it will be the worse for thee in that thy fair fame is at stake. Thus I give thee fair warning."

Alas! the great Abiram's speech is not one whit better received, because not more capable of comprehension than that of his servant, Azael, who has but just now addressed him.

Others appear on the scene, approaching the chief in expectation of making known their wants, but 'tis all the same; no one can in the slightest degree understand the other, whereon, the brow of Abiram becomes overshadowed in anxiety, his soul is filled with dread and convulsed with apprehended danger, for that some unforeseen calamity is impending and on the point of overtaking him

his own soul and intuitive perceptions tell him only too well.

Summoning up his courage he again strives in effort to inquire the cause of this strange proceeding, for that there is something at the bottom of the affair that needs clearing up he is convinced. Yet, as before, nothing comes of it, so he soliloquizes, "Have the gods for a verity taken this thing in hand looking to my downfall?"

"Remember ye not, Abiram, the prophetic words, 'In the day thou despisest my words, hearkening not unto them, in that selfsame day shall thy works come to naught'? Thou would'st not remember, thou would'st not hearken. Thy future shall be given to repentance. The unwieldly structure thou, in thy egotism, doth style tower, will for ever more stand as a monument to thy stupidity, allied to vanity and uncalled for ambition, generations to come gazing thereon as a relic of thy folly."

Thoroughly aroused, for he can conceive no good reason for this serious outbreak on the part of one he has heretofore looked upon in the light of an addled-brained impostor, Abiram, in his wrath exclaims: "Who in the name of the gods, art thou who thus beards the lion in his den, so to speak?"

When on the instant the earth trembles, as in the throes of an earthquake, a voice from above speaks: "Abiram, beware what is said!" Thus causing a thrill of terror to surge through the hearts of all there assembled.

Affrighted and trembling, all bow the knee in token of submission, each head droops in contrition, every eye seeks the ground, for no one dares

to look up, yet ere their faculties are entirely recovered their ears are assailed by a multitude of incongruous sounds emanating from the beasts of burden, who, in harness, stand awaiting signal to move, and having caught the infection, are scarcely less terrified than their masters.

In the midst of the confusion that so largely prevails, voices in startled tones are heard: "To the tower!" When casting their eyes in the direction of the noble structure, flames are beheld issuing from the upper windows.

"Aha!" again cries Jubal. "Methinks 'twas said 'the Great Captain would erect a tower impervious to the flames, and against which neither fire nor water should prevail.'

"Lift up thine eyes, O mighty Chieftain! Behold the brick the artisans did so deftly lay. See how they melt and give way before the raging flames. Yet I would not at this time entirely destroy the work of thy hands. Nay! let it stand until such time as the commoner elements shall have done their work."

The words hardly escaping the lips of the seer when lo, the fires are quenched; Abiram meanwhile casting about to make inquiry, finds the Master's envoy departed, the Great Chief's hopes and aspirations likewise.

And now is heard from all sides a veritable babel of voices in contention, each striving to outdo the other in unavailing attempt to be understood by his neighbor.

Again all eyes are turned toward the towering structure, whose majestic proportions, outlined against a background of purplish sky, bear truth-

ful witness to the excellent workmanship of the builders. That tower whose pinnacles almost pierce the sky, as Abiram, only the evening before hailed Jerusha in the words: "They reveal the gateway entering on heaven's portals, wherein are discerned minarets, spires, domes and battlements rising above the walls of Paradise."

Abiram is suddenly confronted by a conclave of architects, master builders and contractors, who have taken this opportunity to hold speech with their employer as to the proper course to be pursued and measures taken in this deplorable emergency; yet, while lips part and words flow in ceaseless strain, they might as well be given to the winds.

About to give up the contest in despair, a happy thought strikes Abiram, so as a last resort he calls for writing materials, in the belief that while mere uttered words were of no effect, he could see no good reason why, by adopting chirography, success should not crown the effort, so seizing pen, dips it in the ink, applies it to the parchment, thus attempting to record that which speech failed to represent.

The pen moves swiftly, sentences are quickly framed, whole paragraphs turned off as never before; a page is filled, then another, until the entire parchment is lined with what was presumed to be genuine Hebrew characters. The finished manuscript is passed to the architect-in-chief. The learned man scans the workmanship, pores over the contents, again and again seeks its translation, indeed, resorts to every known method whereby to comprehend its significance, until at last, thor-

oughly disheartened, he hands the manuscript to a prominent official, who, adjusting his spectacles, ventures on a like process, but with no better results. Finally, and as a last resort, a general consultation is agreed upon, yet, when put in force the outcome is worse, if possible, than either or all the others. Judging from appearances it had become only too evident that nothing could in any event be accomplished, delay only adding intensity to a conflict wherein the powers of the air were in contention with the selfish interests of earth's poor mortals. Each of the company, in token of farewell, extends a hand to their disappointed chief, then take their departure, full well assured that pursue whatever course they may, struggle against fate as they will, the Master's wrath cannot in any event be assuaged, nor can the pearly gates, although "ajar," be reached by the stairway route.

Again the trumpet sounds "assembly," when the vast array of workmen for the last time congregate; yet, ere a final leave-taking is indulged, many things must be looked after by way of settling up affairs. Horses, camels, bullocks, carts, and a multitudinous array of effects accumulated along a succession of busy years, are to be disposed of; nevertheless, upon attempting settlement, do their best, they are simply working at cross purposes, for no one can in the least understand the other.

At this juncture a skilled artisan hits on an expedient whereby the difficulty seems in fair way to be overcome, so in furtherance of the scheme he jots down a certain number of symbolical characters, each numeral representing a specified sum, thence attaching these characters to a like number

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of beasts of burden, wheeled vehicles or other articles of value, these to be sold or bartered, the entire outfit is ere long disposed of. Leave-taking, now the order of the day, is taken advantage of, some departing with regret, others rejoicing, for they are eager to be on the homeward route, while many uniting in distinct bands, journey to distant lands where hitherto uninhabited portions of the globe are made to feel the regenerating influences of well-directed effort.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER XXII.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR THE COLONEL.

(The original record, as transcribed from the silver tablets, came to an end at the close of the foregoing chapter, and while seemingly truthful, must, in some of its aspects, have been largely forecast, inasmuch as the purported author of the strange history was lost to mortal ken many long ages ago, to again appear in materialized form only as the "Old Hermit of the Mountains.")

RETURNING to the beginning of the story, we find recorded that shortly after Colonel Ashburton's return from the East Indies, in the rôle of Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's regiment, "The Royal Blues," he was ordered to the distant province of Canada, so after a somewhat lengthy and tedious voyage, the Colonel is set down in camp near the wealthy and populous city of Toronto. Through it all the mind of the Queen's active official is constantly tormented, and above all, agitated by the thought of his late exploits wherein the "Mysterious Isle" figured so prominently, for

it had become a settled conviction that more extended and intelligent exploration might possibly result in discoveries far outvying those already achieved. Furthermore, so firmly fixed and so thoroughly imbued was his mind in the belief that it had become a serious matter, nor was he in reality fitted to perform the arduous duties pertaining to the distinguished office he held, viz., Commander-in-Chief of Her Royal Majesty's Colonial Forces. In point of fact, were the truth known, the Colonel's days were largely given up to dreams, his nights freighted with uncanny visions.

In this disagreeable emergency he resolves to petition the home government for another and longer leave of absence, failing in which, he would take immediate steps looking to withdrawal from the service; therefore as a first step to carry the arrangement into effect, he indites a letter to the War Department, detailing in full the object sought, likewise measures necessary to its accomplishment.

The Colonel's communication, forwarded to its proper destination, results in an answer conveying the gratifying assurance that the petition is not only granted, but leave of absence extending to a period of two years, with power to draw on the National Treasury for such sums as might be deemed necessary in furtherance of the object sought.

To say the Colonel was elated upon receipt of this gratifying piece of news would but illy express his feelings, for the proposal was so far in excess of his most sanguine hopes, to say nothing of his expectations, that he was at first loth to give

it credence; however, coming from so high a source, he was forced to the conviction that due importance must have been attached to the ultimate results of an undertaking wherein sound judgment, untiring energy and large outlay must, from the necessity of the case, play a leading part, so turning over the command to a brother officer, in whom he had implicit confidence, he sets sail on a homeward bound steamer.

A speedy voyage, and his native England is reached, whereupon the Colonel, with his accustomed activity, begins preparations looking to the carrying forward of the scheme, greatly, at the outset, facilitated by the steamer "The City of Japan" being put in commission and placed at his service.

In the light of a well-merited hero, past exploits a notable factor contributing to his widespread popularity, Ashburton's fame is known far and wide, wherefore, 'twas scarcely matter of wonder that he should be besieged with applicants for the several positions at his disposal.

Among the large number of applicants were several of the most noted savants of the kingdom, also eminent histriographers, each basing claim on their previous record. Notwithstanding all this, three only, and those the best known, were granted the privilege of accompanying the noteworthy expedition in the above capacity; while one other, under orders of a well-known metropolitan journal—"The London Times"—as correspondent and official reporter, whose exploits and most notable achievements will be found in detail further on.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OUTWARD BOUND VOYAGE.

*On board the British steamer, "The City of Japan,"
June 13, 1883.*

ANCHOR hoisted and all things in readiness, the great ship steams from out the harbor.

As the enterprise is one of unusual occurrence, its object of noteworthy importance, special care has been observed in the selection of officers and crew, also the most rigid scrutiny in general equipment and efficiency, hence the remark was frequently heard that few vessels had sailed from that port under more favorable conditions, the inference drawn that the leading spirit of the unequalled enterprise has at last reached the goal of his ambition, peradventure, nearing the topmost pinnacle of fame, with fair prospect of ultimately gaining the coveted prize, so the enthusiastic Colonel may be seen standing on deck of as fine a vessel as his native land can well boast, and now glancing backward, he beholds Albion's fair shores fast receding, while his thoughts reach forward to the time when he will have it in his power to place before an enraptured world mementoes of bygone ages, peradventure records dating away back to the very "Beginning," and surely the Colonel's noble bearing and upright carriage may

easily be construed as betokening an ambition that will not be satisfied until the grand work he has undertaken shall have been fully accomplished. Furthermore, his unexaggerated manifestations of undaunted courage give tone to the entire ship's company, who vie in endeavor to exhibit to their enthusiastic leader that they are in thorough accord and active sympathy with his mission.

In addition to her powerful engines, "The City of Japan" is bark rigged, hence there would seem nothing in the way of a quick voyage, so, under full press of steam, in conjunction with an immense breadth of canvas, our journey is conducted, until at the close of the thirtieth day out the purpled hills of India are again seen.

A pilot signalled, anchor is soon dropped in a harbor whose waters are of a transparency that objects a hundred or more feet below are plainly visible.

A steam launch is summoned, and ere the night is fully spent the ponderous hoisting machinery, destined to bring to the surface prehistoric remains, lies on the dock, also subsistence for man and beast during the long inland journey.

On reaching India the Colonel again hunts up his old servant, Yoseph, who is only too glad to be of service to his former employer. Active steps are at once taken, whereby a trained body of natives are secured, a score of camels, a number of bullocks, together with wheeled vehicles and a half-dozen horses, ridden by Surgeon Burkhardt, the Colonel, Yoseph, and myself, while the three savants are mounted on the backs of camels. Thus, as a whole, we make a most imposing cavalcade,

especially when brought up by a number of wondrously fashioned carts, constructed for the purpose of conveying the heavy machinery.

Now well along toward October, and as the wet season usually commenced the first of December, storm-swept skies and muddy roads are to be expected, and it necessarily stood the Colonel in hand to hasten his departure, for a long, probably wearisome journey of not less than six hundred miles was to be overcome, a considerable part of the way along desert wastes, jungle entanglements and thickly massed wood, so that travel must necessarily be greatly hindered; however, in no way inclined to indulge in imaginary troubles, we push ahead, Yoseph's extensive knowledge of the country through which we pass greatly facilitating our progress.

Forty and seven days' continuous journeying, and the lengthy train draws up alongside a darksome jungle, within whose gloomy recesses reposes the little lake on whose bosom floats "The Mysterious Isle."

Tents are now pitched and camp set up in anticipation of a thirty days' stay; so it was conceded that preparations must be conducted on a somewhat extended scale. There was, however, a serious drawback to greatly prolonged stay from the fact that lack of water was to be expected, in which event the condition of both ourselves and mute friends might become hazardous. Nevertheless, as the lake was not so very far distant, it was hoped the difficulty might be overcome.

Nightfall approaches, and what a charming spectacle! Scores of camp-fires, from which ascend

thin wreaths of smoke and bright flame illuminating a large space of contiguous territory ; nothing to disturb the brooding silence, other than sounds common to gatherings of like character, for we are hundreds of leagues distant from the habitation of man ; even the everyday wayfarer's tread, common to other parts, is seldom heard in this remote portion of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EXPLORATION.

USHERED in by the bugle's stirring note, dawn at length appears, the far-sounding tones caught up and returned by the wild denizens of wood and jungle,—suggestive—as I was convinced, later confirmed, of concealed, deadly foes, who would gladly make a feast off human flesh, to which they were entire strangers, but whether they would for all time remain so was a problem yet to be solved.

Again were enacted scenes of the previous night, gleaming camp-fires, breakfast, then away, the same pathway leading to the shores of the lake, which, being reached, were found lined by wild beasts, congregated to quench their morning thirst, while the waters are dotted with aquatic fowl, evidently engaged in making all the noise possible, thus seeking to drive from their shores the strange beings intent on taking peaceable possession, if possible, otherwise by force. However, on our appearance the wild beasts haste to their jungle haunts, the fowl seeking safety in flight.

The shores cleared of these would-be barriers to our approach, a squad of natives under Surgeon Burkhardt are detailed as rear guard, the others returning to camp preparatory to transferring the bulky hoisting machinery.

The stout carts hauled by bullocks, several yoke to each vehicle, make their way slowly, laboriously along, a wheel now and then sinking deep in the spongy soil, extricated only by the combined efforts of the drivers, but, notwithstanding these drawbacks, mid-afternoon finds the heavy loads in readiness to be transferred to the island shore.

In order to facilitate the tedious operation,—in fact none other was available—rafts were hurriedly put together, which upon being tested, were found to answer the designed purpose admirably, for with very little labor it was quickly drawn across the narrow channel, and placed in position for being loaded, and now, as night was fast approaching, it was thought best to defer operations until morning.

Again rest and slumber, an early breakfast, then to work. The Colonel active, vigilant, overseeing everything, for this is a day in which his hopes are brought to fruition, else dashed in pieces, and as in this last attempt he naturally desires the most thorough investigation, the surface of the island is excavated to a considerable depth, radiating from center to circumference in all directions.

As a preliminary step to this, however, the lofty monarches of the forest are first felled, then cut in lengths suitable for easy handling, afterward thrown into the waters of the lake. Brushwood and other obstructions are cleared away, and all made ready for pick, spade and shovel.

In this manner is the work carried on without halt or stoppage, for the space of twenty days. The darkness of the night in no wise contributing to hindrance, because of huge bon-fires blazing from different parts of the island, until at the last

the whole area of the little isle is thrown up to a depth exceeding ten feet, but nothing disclosed, other than the tomb brought to light on the Colonel's former visit.

Shears placed in position, tackling applied, to these fastened pulley blocks, and stout hempen cables, from which depend wrought iron grappling hooks, which lowered, grasp the cumbersome sarcophagus, then by the combined power of a dozen hands it is quickly raised to the surface, while the whole company gather round in anxious expectancy as to what will be disclosed, yet illy prepared for the grand things brought to view, for here side by side, are three separate and distinct coffins.

Sand, mold and dirt cleared away reveal to the interested onlooker—what? For answer, exquisitely carved figures. Of whom? Questions soon to be answered to the amazement and unbounded astonishment of all present.

CHAPTER XXV.

STARTLING REVELATIONS.

AT the close of the last chapter we were just entering on exploration which is herewith disclosed, viz.:

Commencing at the central tomb are to be seen the lineaments of a face deeply cut in the marble-like surface, indicative of superior intellect, at the same time attached to a form of almost gigantic proportions. The inscription on this tomb,—the characters were fairly legible—on being deciphered reveal these significant words, to wit:

“These be the remains of Orimentes, the first man moulded from the dust of the earth on the sixth and last day of creation.”

Signed,

C. W.

The tomb on the right bore this inscription:

“Within this sarcophagus lies all that is mortal of Orimentides, the first woman, fashioned out of a rib taken from the side of Orimentes, the first man, while in deep sleep.”

The third and last, and to my mind the most interesting of all, was a tomb whereon was recorded the following simple epitaph:

“’Tis here repose the remains of the friend, and

once while companion of the first created man and woman, whose respective names are Orimentes and Orimentides. Through the evil machinations, false representations and alluring promises of the original tempter,—the Serpent,—Orimentides fell, thus, contributing to a world's downfall."

Upon witnessing these remarkable evidences, corroborating, as they evidently must, the truthfulness of later day records, Colonel Ashburton was nearly overcome by his overwrought emotions.

Shears, ropes and pulleys again adjusted, and brought to bear, result in raising other bodies of like character, all dating away back to the very beginning or the misty ages of a long forgotten past. Among the number,—doubtless the most notable—was that of the renowned Ark builder, and one of the original navigators—Aristides.

On the outer surface of the lid of this tomb in the engraving was the subject of a wondrously modeled craft, suggestive of enormous capacity and wondrous solidity, while underneath was a miniature of the principal architect and leader of the unique scheme.

The next in order was the tomb of Abiram, the celebrated tower builder, whereon was faithfully depicted,—and presumably accurate—representation of a structure, whereby the celestial gates were to be easily reached, accompanied by the following paragraph: "Let not thy ambition override thy good judgment lest a like fate overtake thee."

In this manner was the work carried on, tomb after tomb unearthed. The antiquated relics conclusively showing, as the Colonel had previously re-

marked, "the Isle of the Lake" was undoubtedly a common burial ground where the most remarkable characters of prehistoric times had found a last resting place.

The entire surface of the island having been dug to a depth considerably exceeding the original estimate, yet nothing farther discovered, it only now remained to transfer the priceless treasures to the main—and thence through the dense jungle to the site of the encampment—a task of no little magnitude when taking into account the enlarged weight and attendant inconvenience consequent on hauling the cumbersome loads over the light, porous soil; however, by persistent effort and wearisome labor, camp was at length reached.

Upon consultation it was deemed best to leave the caskets unopened until on shipboard, when plenty of time would be at our disposal. "Moreover," said the Colonel, "the inscriptions on the lids of the several caskets indicate their ownership."

But what of our friends, the savants, who having witnessed achievements so far outvying in importance anything recorded in the annals of Archæology, or disclosed in the realms of science, can hardly find words whereby to express their delight, and on looking over these sacred relics are ceaselessly led to exclaim as in the quotation of the Colonel's, "Great, O God, are Thy works, and Thy ways past finding out."

Notebook and pencil are quickly produced, passing events recorded with the most faithful accuracy as connected with these important discoveries, together with the island scenery, which was to them an entirely new feature.

The carts loaded to their full capacity, and drawn up alongside the encampment, were now prepared for the start, by harnessing bullocks and camels, thus, all things in readiness for an early leave, when at the last moment the Colonel hesitates, and begins to question as to the advisability of setting out until men and cattle shall have become thoroughly rested from the fatigue attendant on their late severe labors, "For," said he, "a long and tedious journey lies before us."

Thus in ever-varying mood, the contemplated change seemingly occupying his thoughts to the exclusion of more weighty matters, for it certainly was a difficult task to decide as to which was the better course, the Colonel was suddenly brought to a standstill by the appearance of a strange, unwonted spectacle, for, coming to our startled ears was a low, monotonous, rumbling sound, momentarily increasing in volume until the whole heavens were choked with the roar, the earth vibrating and trembling as in the throes of some one of nature's mighty convulsions.

The atmosphere becomes stagnant, without sign of life or apparent motion. The camels affrighted, strain at the tugs in frantic effort to break away from the carts. Bullocks moan, horses plunge and rear in very desperation, jungle beasts howl in terror, the birds of the air spread their wings in flight, ill-omened crows flock to a neighboring tree top, cawing their displeasure. The natives with uplifted voice fall prone to the earth, beseeching the all-powerful Allah to appear in interest of his devoted followers.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CATASTROPHE.

TURNING in the direction whence the sounds emanate dense volumes of smoke, mingled with bright flashes of flame, are observed rising; boulders of huge proportions and immense weight are projected high in air, while the earth for leagues in every direction quivers and shakes as though some diabolical, or other potent influence, were in conspiracy looking to our swift destruction.

To add to the horror of the situation the hitherto clear sky becomes overcast with great masses of dark, threatening clouds from which leap flashes of vivid lightning, and thunder roll.

The sun—but a little way above the horizon—wears the look of an immense globe of liquid fire against a background of stony gray.

At this moment his unkempt snowy locks waving in the morning breeze, countenance wearing an unearthly light, deep emotion visible in every lineament of his face, on his wrinkled brow faithfully depicted a purplish hued scar, his thinly clad, meager form floating in mid-air, appears “the Old Hermit of the Mountain.”

Halting in his aerial flight, he lifts up his voice

in the words, "Was it not enough, ye men of Belial, that ye desecrate the tombs of the fathers, that ye must needs, after having my old bones in your keeping, do likewise by theirs? Thereby laying bare secrets that should have been held inviolate, and kept as a sacred trust. Nay, Henry Ashburton, I was minded for this to hold ye guiltless, but ye could not rest content until ye had in possession the remains of the first created of all human beings, even to the tempter, 'The Serpent.'

"How, then, in view of all this can ye expect forgiveness? Though, mayhap, ye think your selfish schemes will carry. We shall see!

"Go to, then, I will no more of ye! yet, ere thou riddeth this goodly land of your presence I would ye cast your eyes abroad, witnessing what your impious hand hath wrought. Look! I say; feast thine eyes on yon clouds of smoke and hissing flame, open thine ears to the devilish sounds that doth rise in confirmation of thy sacrilegious doings—to them, stern witnesses of departed glory; to thee, overweening desire for unearned fame, and to thy shame as well. Haste, I say, go thither, without loss of time, then, in wonder halt, and naught wilt thou look upon other than one grand scene of utter desolation, and after ye shall have gloated over the ruins to thy heart's content, gather together thy ill-gotten plunder and depart the way ye came, but, of this be assured, that a time will come,—the day and hour ye know not—when the bones so deftly deposited on yon hideous carts, shall be clothed in garb of flesh. They will rise up in judgment, thou the victim, they the victor. For as much as I did aforetime warn ye, saying, 'Disturb not the hal-

lowed remains,' and ye did not hearken, so in like manner will be the punishment. Moreover as the first created were cast out from their rightfully acquired inheritance, so wilt thou be cast adrift from thy wrongfully acquired possessions, thy life even shall be forfeited, yet before this sad ending the sacred remains with which, as I said before, thou hast freighted yon hideous carts, shall take on spirit guise, they will become so materialized as to compass thee round about. They will lay hold of thee, after which thou wilt on bended knees plead for mercy, begging them depart in peace, yet this cannot be, for as the deep sea will at the last be thy winding sheet, so in like manner will they follow, bearing thee company to the bosom of the Great Deep.

"Away, then, monster of iniquity, victim of overweening avarice. Go whithersoever thou wilt, but this, remember, that not one jot nor tittle of the punishment awarded thee shall be abated."

The strange, incomprehensible being maintained his mid-air equipoise during the time of the foregoing colloquy, not the slightest motion perceptible save the lifting of an arm in emphasis of the anathemas heaped on the head of his distinguished victim, abruptly disappears, his attenuated form seeming to fade away, dematerializing right before their very eyes.

The clouds of dust, flashing flame, and rising smoke, like unto the prophetic spirit, have also disappeared. During the whole time the foregoing scene has been transpiring the enthralled scientists are engaged in eager converse, rejoicing in exultant tones that the realms of science were never before

so burdened with supernal doings, hence the books of record overflowing with inestimable treasures, for these worthy savants estimate scenes like this from a scientific standpoint only. Indeed, they revel in anticipated triumph, believing this largely augmented wealth will not only redound to their credit, but in due time be spread on the pages of scientific reviews; not only this, but will be displayed in the columns of that most noted of all journals—"The London Daily Times."

The strange, weird spectacle had for them few terrors, but not so with myself. Indeed, I knew not what to think, much less how to act, yet this much I can honestly vouch for, that were I at this very moment to be spirited away back to my cozy office in the Times building, nothing in the world would have better pleased me, not, however, in that my mind was unduly exorcised in view of the uncanny transactions, nor that I was at all capable of comprehending these signal manifestations of supernal agency, notwithstanding all this, I was fain to argue that the whole affair was doubtless some easily explained phenomena wherein nature's doings played no insignificant part, else some grand method of deception—diabolical—may be, but none the less effective; anyhow, this was to my mind the most sensible conclusion at which I could arrive. Not so, however, with Colonel Ashburton, who, holding strongly to the supernatural, was most unaccountably, not to say fearfully agitated; so to test the matter, "the old fortune teller's veracity," as put by Yoseph, the company was ordered to retain position in line, and to hold itself in readiness for instant departure, while accompanied by

Yoseph and myself, the Colonel would turn back to the scene of the late exploration, whence arose the explosion. But what was the consternation of all to find nothing but a waste of waters, "the Mysterious Isle," together with the ancient relics of mortality had totally disappeared, and absolutely nothing left to tell of what had been, save several floating logs, brushwood and debris of like nature, while a considerable part of the lake was strewn with the mangled, lifeless remains of wild beast and fowl.

Upon beholding this sudden and wholly unlooked for transformation, this rapid change from "the little isle of the lake" to the broad waters of an inland sea, the Colonel was for a second time so nearly overcome that his massive form trembled, his military cap fell from his shaking head,—as vouched for by Yoseph,—“from an external upheaval of his bristly locks,” his usually flushed face assumed a sallow hue, and while at all times and under every circumstance esteemed a brave soldier, he was nevertheless at this particular time fearfully shaken.

But what shall be said of the return journey, fraught, as this necessarily must be, with innumerable perils and hardships, the lateness of the season contributing largely to bad roads, for scarcely a day passed without more or less rain, the wheels of the heavily laden carts frequently sinking to the axles in the mud, the hardest labor only sufficing for their extrication. While malarial fever invades the ranks, many falling victims to the deadly scourge.

Thus was the journey continued until nightfall

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of the sixtieth day, when our eyes were gladdened and our hearts thrilled by a sight which caused a throb of ecstasy to pervade every soul, for away in the distance, from "The City of Japan's" mast-head was unfurled and floating on the evening breeze the flag of my native land, "the Union Jack."

CHAPTER XXVII.

RETURNING TO ENGLAND.

WE were three days out on the homeward voyage when I suggested that the stone enclosed treasures be opened up, at the same time aware the Colonel's mind was in a singular state of unrest. However, assenting without comment, the task was commenced, when his drooping spirits seemed to revive, excitement took the place of listlessness, and he really seemed on the point of becoming the stout-hearted, equipoised man of the world as of yore, and little wonder, under the attendant stimulating influences caused by the remarkable objects brought to view.

The first casket to which attention was directed, as inscribed on the outer lid, was the first created of all human beings—Orimentes.

Unfastening the lid what do we discern? A mass of bones only? Nay, rather a form—to all appearance—of flesh and blood.

It now occurred to me that speculation had at some time been rife, relative to the unusual weight of this particular casket. This was, however, readily explained, for upon examination we find a body, perfect in all its parts, yet of a consistency of granite and of reddish cast.

Upon accurate measurement the remarkable fact was disclosed that here was a being in life standing not less than twelve feet three inches in height, shoulders three feet and one inch in breadth, a head of proportionate size, the weight of the entire form—as estimated—a full half ton. Truly a magnificent specimen of manhood, wherefore one might be led to the conclusion “that man was really made in the image of his creator.”

Does anyone question that a human body could thus remain intact for a period,—according to established authority—of six thousand years at least? Then let such a person attempt the removal of the lid of this casket, for the joints were so perfectly cemented with some particular substance as to defy the utmost efforts, save that of a finely tempered chisel driven with sledgehammer blows, whereby its removal was effected.

From this pertinent fact it at once became apparent that the coffin was so entirely impervious to the outer air, that the body might have remained in this same condition another six thousand years, “peradventure”—as suggested by an irreverent sailor—“till the resurrection morn.”

The inside of the casket was now thoroughly examined, but nothing revealed save a number of pieces of gold coin. A second look, however, extorts an exclamation of surprise, for deeply chiseled on one side was a niche guarded by a slide so neatly arranged as to require an expert to detect anything but a perfectly smooth surface, and a burglar would, it was thought, be apt to get little for his pains.

Farther examination revealed the fact that within

the concealed opening were a series of beautifully engraved plates, presumably a record of the times, both coin and plates dating back to the year six hundred and ten.

After a few explosive notes of genuine surprise the coins were carefully laid away for future criticism, or rather, examination, after which work on the second casket was commenced.

This was also hermetically sealed, the utmost strength seconded by the sledge only serving to make an impression on the flinty compound; however a few well directed blows severed the lid of a sarcophagus, wherein were found the well preserved remains of the first woman—Orimentides.

The form of Orimentides was nine feet two and one-half inches in length, and of admirable proportions. The lineaments of the face appearing careworn and aged, suggestive of a life of toil and care, possibly tinged with remorse.

Gold coin bearing even date with the others were also found, but no tablets.

“What an exquisite creature must this in life have been? Sun kissed locks falling to her feet, a countenance expressive of thoughts and desires, only given to natures such as hers undoubtedly was, hence the appearance of this, the first woman, must have been truly majestic. Little wonder then the Serpent’s eagerness to possess her charms, allied to intense affection, nor is it to be wondered at that Orimentes should have fallen an easy victim to her wiles.”

’Twas thus I meditated as looking on a form, but just now exposed to view, the long period of six thousand years of silent repose intervening between

all that was mortal of the first created, mother of future generations, was laid away within the darksome recesses of the mysterious isle of the lake, the idea intensified by the thought that the spirit once dwelling in that lovely form might for all that I knew at this very moment be hovering near. I was soon recalled to earth and earthly things by an exclamation. Turning, I found the Colonel and a sailor tugging away for dear life in vain attempt to unloose the third casket, wherein was enclosed—as affirmed by the inscription—the remains of Aristides.

Nothing was here disclosed but a petrified body, “yet hold! What is this I see?” my eye on the instant lighting on a projection at the farther end of the casket.

“Hold,” again I cry, and well were we repaid for so doing, for within a hollowed chamber extending the whole length of the sarcophagus, was a well preserved model of the vessel wherein were saved and preserved the progenitors of the entire human family, commonly known as “The Ark.”

“Were confirmation of the universal deluge required, other than that developed from biblical record, here we have it,” sententiously spoke the Colonel. “Furthermore,” he continues, “I consider this relic of greater importance than all the others, and that is saying a good deal,” and well might the Colonel so consider this of the utmost importance, for in this must the oft-mooted question of a universal deluge be forever set at rest, inasmuch as here was the actual, conclusive proof.

Continuing investigation we arrive at the fourth casket, sealed, as were the others, whereon was in-

scribed, "Abiram, the builder of a tower, expected to furnish an easy route to Paradise."

The robes in which the bodies were originally enshrouded when laid away, soon became so decomposed by exposure to the air, as to rise in an impalpable powder that was fearfully stifling; however, this soon passed away leaving nothing behind.

The fifth, and last remaining casket, was now taken in hand, and while of less weight, was in no respect of less account, for on deciphering the characters it bore, the astonishment was not one whit abated, for here was a coffin lid whereon was inscribed the one word, "Tempter," followed by the warning, "by whose machinations, misrepresentations, falsehoods and treachery the first man and woman fell from their high estate, being expelled from the celestial garden." Nothing was here disclosed save the vertabrae, skin and rear appendage, otherwise the warning rattles, while on the under side of the outer lid cut in the granite-like surface were the significant words, "Beware the Serpent."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

OUR wearisome, though wondrously interesting task was finished,—for there were no more caskets to be unsealed—hence, nothing farther required to complete a conquest, whereto the grave has given up its illustrious, and as previously remarked, long-forgotten dead. The day was nearly spent, though to this I would not have given a thought, had the Colonel's drooping spirits not caused him, as I feared, to relapse into his former disconsolate mood.

Wearily raising his head he glances enquiringly about, carefully replaces the lids of the several caskets, allowing his glance to fall toward each, as I imagined, in the nature of a farewell, then, like the desert Arab, quietly folded his arms, silently repairing to his quarters.

Were my imaginings to be verified? Alas! 'twas thus I feared. I saw no more of the Colonel until we took our accustomed seats at the table, he partaking of the meal in a seemingly pre-occupied manner and silently, save a single passing remark, "Josiah, it is my impression that we had better set about the translation of the tablets as soon as possible after breakfast."

Readily assenting, we soon after retired to rest, that is to say on my part, but on that of the Colonel it was something different, for instead of sleep he seemed in a state of morbid restlessness; however, the night passed away without special incident, the early morning finding us seated at the breakfast table, when a half hour later we adjourned to the cabin in readiness for translating the unknown tongue,—“The Old Mountain Hermit” having at the time of the memorable visit placed the Colonel in possession of the key to those ancient hieroglyphics, therefore, no great difficulty was anticipated as to the result.

Nearly sixty days was consumed in the work, meantime the tablets thoroughly deciphered and transcribed in manuscript form, the Colonel delighted at the thoroughness with which it had been done, while my satisfaction was none the less pronounced, for my pen had been in constant activity the whole time.

One afternoon as I was thus employed the Colonel, who during the whole of the afternoon had scarcely spoken, rather sitting complacently by, came to my side, saying, “Josiah, good friend, and true, as I believe you to be, I want you to understand that it is my earnest desire that you take entire charge of the manuscript, for my mind seems burdened with strange, not to say, fearful forebodings. Now, to you this may seem foolish. But when I tell you that I get little rest by day, and no sleep at night, my mind filled with visions of forthcoming ill, what, let me ask, can I do? What imagine other than that I stand on the threshold of some fearful calamity? Therefore, Josiah, I beseech, im-

plore thee, guard these ancient treasures, this history of events hitherto hidden in the womb of the past, for once lost, they can never, no never, be replaced, so I repeat, guard them as your life. Aye, protect them at all hazards, for once destroyed a loss would accrue whereby a thousand lives would hardly suffice in payment."

CHAPTER XXIX.

DOOMED.

“A COUPLE of weeks more of this sort of weather will see us steaming up the Thames.”

Thus spoke the captain, as pacing the upper deck, a clear sky above and smooth sea beneath, we were holding cheerful converse, the subject largely devoted to our home coming.

The weather for several days past had been unusually fine, and the ship's progress correspondingly rapid. The captain's cheery predictions, as above noted, giving assurance of safe return.

Referring to the manuscript, of which little had been said since the reading,—the vast array of facts therein presented, as yet scarcely digested,—the learned scientists habitually brooding over a long forgotten past, were to say the least, in a singular state of unrest.

The voluminous manuscript, burdened with a wealth of knowledge obtainable from no other source, would, as I trusted, soon be published, then, thought I, will the Colonel's fame be established, while I might possibly, in my own personality, come in for a share of praise, no matter how small—for I had so indefatigably adhered to his fortunes, accompanying him through fair weather and foul, regardless of the outcome, that surely, thought I,

the glory, if any, must be partly mine. But alas! 'twas not so to be; for while it was true the consummation of our most ardent desires was, as far as we could judge, close at hand, yet never, no never, to be realized.

On this the last evening the Colonel and myself betook ourselves to the deck, where we remained until a late hour. The principal topic of conversation the probable effect on the public mind of forthcoming disclosures, the Colonel taking the ground that while it was but natural to expect skeptics to abound, proof would not be found wanting in furtherance of the claims put forth, nor would authenticity of the ancient records be questioned.

"Proof," the Colonel shouts, "yea, proof that cannot be gainsaid, nor set aside. Yet,"—with a long-drawn sigh,—“I much misdoubt, if I be there to see. Josiah,” he continues, “whatsoever may chance to befall, whatever fate betide, preserve the manuscript. Aye! preserve it as the apple of your eye, for between those covers are pages of untold wealth, treasures above price.”

"Priceless treasures in very truth," I reply. "And so long as life holds out, so long to the manuscript will I cling, and only when the sea doth claim me for its own will I relinquish hold."

"Consider that speech the most remarkable event of your life," smilingly rejoins the Colonel, then in saddened tones: "In you, Josiah, do I both trust and hope; let me not have it to say, I've been disappointed."

"So say I, my friend, in so far as regards the manuscript, but not so in regard to your forebodings of evil."

"Have it as you will," he returns, "I can but fulfil whatsoever destiny awaits me."

It was now getting along toward midnight, so bidding the Colonel "adieu," we separate, retiring to our state rooms, thence to bed, and so far as I was concerned, presumably to sleep.

As is well known, I had given the Colonel my sacred promise that I would to the utmost in my power conform to his wishes in regard to the manuscript's preservation, yet, how little did I realize what that promise meant, for I could not have anticipated the straits into which I would be forced in order to carry out the promise. Nay, nor could one,—save as gifted with the spirit of prophecy—forestall the thrilling events in connection with the awful scenes soon to be encountered.

Shortly before leaving the steamer's deck I had noticed a portentous cloud off the starboard bow, but not desiring in any manner to contribute to the Colonel's state of unrest, I had refrained from calling his attention thereto. Indeed I had given little thought to it myself, nevertheless deeming it a matter of prudence to be prepared for whatsoever emergency might chance to arise, I turned in without removing my clothing and well it was that I did so.

Again a notable circumstance contributing to a sense of security lay in the fact that shortly before setting out on the voyage I had, by the advice of friends, purchased a newly invented rubber attachment, in the words of the patentee: "The only life saving apparatus of the kind extant, and the only one that in an emergency can be depended upon, because it encloses the wearer in a perfectly sealed

envelope impervious to the action of water, and which, fully inflated will bear the occupant up against the foulest kind of weather, and the most tempestuous seas."

And now to make assurance doubly sure, I draw the sack over my outer garments, placing my valuables inside of an inner pocket, though when I say valuables, I simply mean the aforesaid manuscript, of more real worth than a cargo of gold and silver watches, in my own case represented by a very common one of the latter material; so that taking it all in all, I was to all appearance well prepared for storm, tempest, and even shipwreck—the latter calamity giving me little concern—yet, must needs admit that the Colonel's excessive fears had a tendency toward similar feelings within myself.

Notwithstanding these precautionary measures court the drowsy god as I would, I could get no sleep, my mind constantly reverting to the stone enclosed treasures reposing on deck of a vessel, whereof none other in the world's history had been so honored.

Thus hovering on the borders of dreamland, or rather between sleep and wakefulness, my mind enchained as by ligaments of steel, I was all at once aroused to full consciousness, and perhaps a sense of the situation, by a vivid flash, quickly succeeded by a heavy roll of thunder, thus giving fair warning of what was to be expected, flash after flash in quick succession, each followed by terrific roar, until it seemed as if the whole heavens had entered into conspiracy looking to our swift destruction.

"Every man to his post," came in stentorian tones, the heavy tread of many feet overhead, evi-

dencing the quick obeying of the order, each beat of piston rod sending a quiver throughout the staunch ship. The Colonel, excessively agitated, immediately appearing on deck, his face blanched to death-like hue, each lineament settled in stern resolve to do, and if needs must, die. The one and only sentence escaping his lips, "Josiah, my time has come. Remember the promise."

Stationed at the Colonel's side, the rubber sack fully inflated, enquiring glances, broad smiles, accompanied by jocose sallies, consequent on my comical appearance directed toward me. It seemed an imperative duty that I should offer my life saving apparatus, begging the Colonel to accept it, followed by the assurance that my poor life was worthless in comparison to his own. But, alas! The words are scarcely out of my mouth when with a shriek and a roar, the winds in all their fury burst upon the ship, the waves with sledgehammer blows beat against her sides. The bulwarks are crushed, the masts fall, the sails torn in shreds, float away on the gale, the sea in all directions is upheaved. Lightning flash, and the boom of heaven's artillery, incessant, the doomed ship plunges recklessly onward, her bow engulfed, then the stern, while the man at the helm is nearly overcome by the remorseless waves.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SHIPWRECK.

THE once while proud steamer, "City of Japan," lies on the bosom of the sea, a plunging, sinking, hopeless wreck, her bow shattered, bulwarks crushed, engine rooms flooded, cabins deluged, it is but a question of time, and that but little prolonged, when she must inevitably succumb, going down beneath the weight of waters within the depths of which she is even now on the verge of being engulfed.

"For God's sake lower the boats," in ringing tones from the still undismayed captain. Again, "lower the boats, else we perish." Too late, for ere it is possible to carry out the order the steamer reels, swaying back and forth, seemingly in hesitating mood—before taking the final leap. Hurriedly I climb the broken rail, thence with a bold leap find myself floating on the bosom of the boiling sea, yet 'twas only by the most strenuous effort I was enabled to preserve my equilibrium so as not to be drawn in the vortex of the sinking ship. However, with a goodly amount of presence of mind, I moved a considerable distance away from the sinking vessel, then rested, floating,—I cannot in truth venture to say at ease,—on the contrary,

was tossed about like a cork on the bosom of the great deep, soon thereafter beholding a spectacle it would tax my patience to describe.

The ship's company collected near to the bow of the ship, Colonel Ashburton, surgeon and savants, huddled about the stump of the fallen mast, hardly able to maintain an upright position, for the ship was heeled over until her bulwarks nearly touched the water, therefore it was very like a roof at an angle of 45 degrees, and nothing wherewith to cling.

Thus floating, my every sense on the alert, at the same time well knowing eternity was not far away, my fellow voyagers the victims, when all of a sudden mid shrieks, cries, and from some, curses, the steamer gives another lurch, then sinks from sight, leaving nothing visible other than a wide waste of seething waters.

And now, good friends, think not from what follows that my brain was in an addled state, nor that I am indulging in fictitious tales; on the contrary, my mind was never clearer, while the tale is susceptible of proof. Wherefore, I do most solemnly avow that right before my very eyes a long, bony finger extended, and pointing in direction of the late disaster, form floating, as on another occasion, in mid-air, was "The Old Hermit of the Mountain."

For the moment forgetting my constrained position, I thought to flee, or in some manner rid myself of the uncanny apparition, then bethinking myself that I was wholly at the mercy of whomsoever might choose to take advantage of my helplessness I concluded to remain at ease, and await the issue,

which, however, was not long in coming, for suddenly a voice in accents thoroughly familiar spoke: "Behold, O sacrilegious mortal, what wicked hands hath wrought, unto what selfish schemes hath led? Moreover, while in doubting wonderment as to why so many of thy betters have perished, fail not in remembrance, 'That pride ever goeth before a fall.' Vastly uplifted was thy friend Ashburton, undue ambition a notable characteristic of his nature, greed of gain, a peculiarity for which he was not responsible, though, as to this latter, I am not so well assured, yet, this I do know, and so dost thou, that in disobeying my injunctions for the purpose of self-aggrandisement, and in every possible way striving to set aside my just demands, he didst thus defy a power of which he has little knowledge.

"Go to, then, O scribe. Yea, depart whithersoever thou wilt, and should the uttermost bounds of the earth, cognizant of thy approach, challenge thy mission, and its special design, no harm shall at any time come to thee, only so thou spread the tale abroad, publishing it far and wide, 'that for every disobedient act a penalty is adjudged,' in this thou wilt by so much be the gainer.

"See, O scribe, to what an inglorious end thy friend the Colonel hath come. Forget not, then, to tell the story as told thee by 'The Old Mountain Hermit.'

"Ha! ha! the fools," he continues, his voice soothly modulated until at the last the tones are hissing, then in exultant mood, "Let my voice be heard, earth's remotest bounds listening thereto of prophecy fulfilled," when suddenly there appears at his side and all about the shadowy forms of those

so lately gone to their doom, the deep blue sea their winding sheet.

To the right was the form of Orimentes, the first created, still farther to the right I readily distinguished the shadowy form of Orimentides, the first woman. While to the left was Aristides, "the famous Ark builder," Abiram, the projector of the great tower, also glistening under the bright canopy of heaven were to be seen the undulating figure, and shimmering folds of the original tempter, "the Serpent."

And now, all is stilled, the voice of the "Old Mountain Hermit" heard no more, the crash of the onrushing billows hushed, nothing to be seen other than the blue sea around me, nothing above save the starry heavens, from out which peeps the early morning star.

The shadowy forms meanwhile have disappeared in their wake, as I conjectured, though this might have been the result of an overwrought imagination, a sinuous train of sulphurous vapor.

Turning in the direction where my ill-fated companions had so lately gone to their doom, I was startled beyond measure, and no less gratified, for at a little distance away I saw an object that seemed to have a familiar appearance, which, on closer inspection, I found to be one of the "Japan's" life boats.

For the moment failing to remember the unique situation in which I was placed, in the exuberance of my joy, I shout in tones both vigorous and loud, "Boat ahoy!" but no answering hail. Again in louder, more peremptory tones I cry, "Boat ahoy!" Still no answer, which, upon reflection I well knew

could not be, for the diminutive craft is without skipper, crew or passengers. What could I expect? So gathering my wits together, and as many of my nearly exhausted energies as possible, I put off for the craft as rapidly as my poor means of navigation would permit.

A half-hour of vigorous paddling enabled me to draw near, when putting forth all my remaining strength I soon came alongside, thence to the stern, but what do I see? Maybe a piece of tarred rope, gunny sack, or some other equally undesirable article, as one might naturally suppose. Not so; however, on the contrary, I discern an air-tight compartment, within which was a bag of sea biscuit, a can of preserved meat, supposed at the time beef, proving later a fallacy, though horse or other detestable meat would have proved no doubt palatable. Yet what gave me more satisfaction than all else, was a jug of fresh water.

"Ha! What is this?" I exclaim as seizing a flask whereon was inscribed the cabalistic words, "Jamaica rum."

"Gloria in excelsis," was what I was on the point of saying, but instead quote that familiar hymn, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and I was wondrously comforted, notably after a pull at the flask.

Now with tooth and nail I attack meat and biscuit, feeling thereby like a new man,—actions don't count,—peradventure like unto Orimontes, when the eyes of that remarkable man were first opened to the felicities of paradisaical life, anyhow in my own case Paradise was but little way removed.

Carefully pushing my way to the center of the

boat I climbed the thwarts, though with a good deal of difficulty, being so encumbered with the inflated sack, then dropped to the bottom, completely worn out from the long, unintermittent struggle with nature's elements, combined with loss of sleep and mental torture.

'Twas thus I lay, now and again partially aroused to stern contemplation of my perilous situation, yet scarcely conscious of anything save the gently lapping waves as they beat against the sides of the frail boat, else shrill cry of some swift winged bird of prey soaring overhead, eye intent on the motionless form underneath, choice morsel no doubt offered in expiation of the fearful deeds enacted by the gods during the silent watches of the past night.

The sun is momentarily rising higher in the heavens until the zenith is reached, still no call to dinner. Whereon, in my thoughtlessness I shout, "Am I to be thus left and no summons to the noonday meal? Surely, such is not the usual way of treating passengers on board ship? Why, then, should I be left to go hungry while the others are well attended to?" Thoughts suggested before sufficiently awakened to realize the situation; however, bethinking myself that I am not on shipboard with friends, companions and passengers about me, but lone survivor of a deadly shipwreck, am about to resign myself to the inevitable by again falling asleep, when I am abruptly recalled to a sense of my perilous condition and full state of wakefulness by the well known hail, "Ship, ahoy! What craft is that?"

Springing to an upright position I turn in direction of the hail, when I am almost bereft of my

senses, and quite overcome with joy, for in plain sight, and not very far distant, I perceive a large ship in the act of heaving to, her deck filled with an apparently anxious, enquiring group of sailors.

Am I awake or dreaming? The first thought that came to me. The second, "Is yon craft a reality or the result of an overwrought imagination?" I rub my eyes in effort to arouse my drowsy faculties, then gaze long lingeringly, and above all, anxiously, and this is what my gaze rests upon: a frigate apparently of the first class, yards well braced, her decks crowded with seamen and marines, officers in undress uniform, while from the mast-head again waving in the breeze, is the emblem of my native land, "the Union Jack."

CHAPTER XXXI.

RESCUED.

KINDLY hands are extended, questioning looks given from the generous hearted sailors, who vie in endeavor to make my coming welcome. But it is not long ere the cry goes up, "Whence cometh thou and whither bound?"

To the first I answer, "The steamer, 'City of Japan,' now fast anchored at the bottom of the sea."

To the second, "Bound for the shores of old England."

"Nay, nay," says one. "I should say, judging from your queer appearance, you were bound to consort with the fishes," and little wonder, for the rubber sack was like an inflated bladder, swelling me out, until a genuine porpoise was a picture in comparison to my ugly appearance; nevertheless, I might very easily have been taken for that sort of a marine animal.

Ordering the frigate to resume her course the captain bidding me follow, retires to the cabin, and in kindly manner suggests that I shake myself out from the life saving sack, to which advice I the more readily comply, for to tell the truth I was nearly perishing from the burthen; however, in

removing it I was careful to handle it gently, for it had stood me a true friend in need. Upon its removal my underclothing was found quite dry, the manuscript in excellent state of preservation, again proving conclusively the benefits derived from wearing the rubber attachment.

Affairs on shipboard satisfactorily adjusted. It was my settled purpose not to divulge the contents of the manuscript, as this would naturally tend to forestall publication.

Enquiry elicited the fact that the vessel so opportunely appearing in my behalf was none other than Her Majesty's Frigate, "The Andromeda," Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, her prospective destination, Chinese waters.

"Prospective?" I say the well worn adage, "Man proposes, but a higher power disposes," never finding more fitting application than in the case of "The Andromeda."

Inasmuch as the destiny of one Josiah Bartholemew evidently lay in the same direction the entire voyage, for by no possibility could I leave the ship until the end of the cruise, and not desiring to act the part of a sponge on the generosity of the captain, nor to remain an idle spectator of the stirring scenes likely to be encountered, for "The Andromeda" was a war vessel on a warlike expedition bent, I begged the captain to give me some sort of employment, it mattered little in what direction, therefore, it so chanced that I was commissioned private secretary, and I might as well add, scribe to the whole ship's company, for of a temperament to be of service to everybody with whom I am brought in contact, I cheerfully surrendered a con-

siderable part of my time to epistolary correspondence. The soft hearted tars' letters were freighted with love messages to their far-away English sweet-hearts.

In this manner sixty or more days pass, favoring winds bearing us on our way with as much ease and comfort as could well be expected on a voyage of this nature, for it was no holiday excursion I can assure you.

The captain, as previously noted, while a generous, high-souled man, was at the same time a strict disciplinarian, never a duty neglected, at all times thoughtful and painstaking in regard to the welfare of those entrusted to his charge.

While "The Andromeda" was an exceptionally fine vessel, she was manned by an exceptionally fine crew, the men at arms numbering not less than two hundred, nearly all of whom had seen service in some part of the world on either land or sea, therefore, as might be expected were overjoyed at the prospect of throwing down the gauntlet for the measly pig-tails to pick up, providing they had the courage—without thought of attending consequences, such at all events was the general expression among the soldiery.

On a subsequent morning, at the first streak of dawn, the look-out cried, "Sail ho!"

"Where away?" in ringing tones.

"Three points to windward," the answer.

Hearing the hail and reply, Captain Lighthouse sprang from his bed, drew on his undress uniform. Then, glass in hand, hurried on deck, pointing the telescope in the direction indicated by the look-out.

Thus remaining for a few moments, he suddenly cries out:

"My God, the blasted pirates," then ordered the drums beat to quarters, while marines, headed by their officers, haste on deck, fully prepared for the fray.

But what, it may be asked, has "The Andromeda's" commander seen to account for the expletive and call to arms?

In answer a sail, quickly followed by a second, third, fourth, indeed, a whole fleet, numbering no less than a score of junks, manned, and, to all appearance, heavily armed.

Careful estimate revealed the unwelcome fact that the approaching fleet numbered forty vessels, each manned by fifty well armed, and as fairly well disciplined body of savage cut-throats as could be found, search the world over. But, as Captain Lighthouse was not a man to be cowed by numbers, nor grow faint of heart for lack of courage, the battle would from the very necessity of the case be of an extraordinarily sanguinary nature, for it stood to reason that "The Andromeda's" people would fight to the death, for defeat meant nothing less anyhow. These were the influences that made my arm grow strong, as grasping the hilt of a sabre I there and then resolved to do, and if needs must, die. For, why should I not be willing to lay down a life consecrated to those who had—in my extremity—so gallantly come to the rescue? The prediction of one who had so often said, "No harm shall come to thee, Bartholemew, for I have need of thy services," contributed largely to a sense of security, and I must confess that an inborn hope held pos-

session of my faculties, because of his shadowy form even now hovering overhead, lending aid in protecting me from the perils of the deep; but the enemy's fire was another thing, and about which I was not so sure.

A dead calm prevailing would naturally have a tendency to cause "The Andromeda's" sails to hang inert, motionless, so it was an impossibility to work the great ship—a condition of affairs that prompted the irate captain to boil with rage insisting that could the frigate's guns be brought to bear he would sink every d—d one of the wretches inside a half hour.

The enemy's craft low in the water, "The Andromeda" correspondingly elevated, it became a matter of impossibility to depress the guns sufficiently to meet the emergency, so our only recourse lay in striving to prevent them gaining foothold on our decks.

A crisis in affairs seeming on the point of realization, Captain Lighthouse beckoned me to draw near, then, in impressive tones, spoke:

"Bartholemew, canst pray? If so, down on your knees and pray as never before, beseeching the good Lord for a blessing in shape of a capful of wind, not forgetting to add, 'Please, Lord, don't linger long in its bestowal, else yon demons will in about five minutes be seen swarming our decks,' and hark, you, Josiah, unless the powers above or beneath, it doesn't matter much which, intercede in our behalf the fate of 'The Andromeda' is inevitably sealed."

On supposition the captain's fears were exaggerated, I attempted reasoning with him, urging

the imminence of our peril was possibly unfounded, again the bare idea of the commander of a notable warship begging assistance of an humble secretary, by way of intercession of the higher powers, in interest of a capful of wind, was, to say the least, ridiculous, anyhow too much for my risibilities to withstand, so I fell into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, the well-meaning officer joining, and with good reason, for on the instant the surface of the water became agitated, the drooping colors fluttered, a slight puff of air flattened the sails.

Turning our eyes seaward, a cloud wearing an ominous look was observed rising in the offing.

"Glory to God, and praised be His name," piously ejaculated the overjoyed captain. Then in stentorian tones, "Every man to his post. Stand by in readiness to hoist sail."

'Twas not long before every sheet that could draw was spread to the breeze, when the captain again turned to me, a quizzical expression coming over his face. "Josiah, my boy, that little petition of yours has been answered, and that right speedily, and as the saying goes, 'It never rains, but it pours,' so I wouldn't be surprised if we got more wind than was bargained for." Nevertheless the peril by which we were threatened, while lessened, was simply prolonged, a fact of which we were soon apprised, for now was heard the fall of swiftly beating sweeps, accompanied by the horrid tom-toms, brandishing spears, amid shouts from a thousand throats, as the barbarian freighted crafts swung around "The Andromeda's" quarter, looking for an opening to board. Musket shot and revolver

crack sounding the death knell of many now in eager pursuit of their anticipated victims, and despite all that could be done the enemy finally succeed in gaining the deck, whereon the nettings are torn away, the elated foe pressing onward gain the coveted vantage, outnumbering the frigate's people ten to one.

In the lead a gigantic half clothed savage, in whom his followers evidently have the utmost confidence. The enemy maintain a steady front, and attack with boldness and courage.

The ominous appearing cloud continues to rise and spread, until the blue sky is lost in the gloom, yet not the most remote show of wind, scarcely enough to make impression on the drooping sails. Thus "The Andromeda" standing motionless, her guns are thereby rendered useless.

In this frightful emergency Captain Lighthouse is entreated to shorten sail, but indulging less fear from the storm, now rapidly approaching, than from the deadly weapons of the foe, remains obdurate, continuing to pile on the canvas in endeavor to run clear. Vain endeavor, vain hope, for the "pig-tails," pouring on deck, press "The Andromeda's" defenders so stoutly, and by sheer force of numbers compel them to fall back, even to demanding "unconditional surrender." But Captain Lighthouse, brave soul that he is, has no thought of giving up the contest without one last desperate effort, so calling together his officers, in whom he has the utmost confidence, briefly addresses them in interest of firing the magazine. Says he, "My brave comrades, perilous situations call for desperate measures, and as the fate of 'The

Andromeda' is, to all intents and purposes, sealed; moreover, as to myself I'd rather be blown sky high, than fall into the hands of these merciless wretches,—what say you to the proposed measure?" Yet before the desperate measures could be resorted to a wondrous thing happened, for again looking seaward a spectacle was brought to view that compelled the blood to chill, every heart to cease beating.

"But what was this strange spectacle?" may be asked. For answer, "Towering mountain high, crest outlined against a stony gray background, slowly, majestically approached an enormous wave."

I, Josiah Bartholemew, haste to my quarters, don the rubber sack, in readiness for whatsoever emergency may arise.

It so chanced "The Andromeda" lay broadside to the oncoming wave, as remarked the captain, "If sail cannot be made the frigate is doomed, and all on board lost," meanwhile the infuriated combatants, thinking of nothing but to conquer, continue fighting, the battle raging with the utmost fury, the enemy maintaining the ground gained at the outset with no thought of falling back.

On suggestion of one of "The Andromeda's" gunners the howitzer amidships was loaded to the muzzle and turned on the piratical gang, resulting in immense slaughter, whereon hope began to revive in the breasts of the frigate's crew, but it was doomed to be short lived, for notwithstanding the beggarly pirates cowardly turned tail and fled for their lives, at least such was the inference drawn on witnessing their hasty withdrawal from the scene of conflict, the wave, doubtless the offshoot

of some one of nature's convulsions, still continues its approach, seeming to gain in power and volume as it comes nearer, now but a few leagues distant.

"The wave will soon be upon us," shouts the terrified captain, "so its every man for himself."

Taking the sweeping hint I climb the rail and plunge headlong into the sea. Then paddling a short distance away, rest on my oars—so to speak—conceiving I was far enough away from the ship to avoid being drawn down in the vortex should the vessel suddenly sink, which, considering the enormous weight of the heavy guns, could scarcely be avoided when engulfed by the towering wave now close at hand.

Having removed a goodly distance from the doomed ship, I rest at ease, lightly floating on the surface, at the same time questioning whether I have acted the part of an honorable man in thus deserting my comrades in the hour of peril, consoling myself, however, by the thought that to remain would be simply to court death without compensating results, for I could do nothing to ward off threatened danger, indeed I was as helpless as a newly born babe.

Thus meditating I beheld a spectacle that should I live a thousand years would not be effaced from my memory. Yet would to God such might be the case, for sleeping or waking it is ever in my thoughts, torturing me by the recollection.

I was just on the point of again turning when the wave struck the ship, crushing, overturning, weighing her down so that but a few moments later nothing was visible save a waste of tumultuous, upheaving billows.

The enemy convinced that deadly peril was at hand, sprang for the junks, many in their eagerness falling into the sea; no time to pick them up, no time for hesitancy or indecision, for unless the oncoming flood found them a good distance away from its destructive path their doom was also sealed. Too late, too late, for ere a half score beat of the sweeps, they are caught in the flood's embrace, and like their antagonists quickly swallowed up, sinking beneath the weight of waters.

CHAPTER XXXII.

STARTLING DISCLOSURES.

"ALONE, again alone! no retrieving sail in sight, no friendly arm on which to lean, no kindly hand to succor. Alas! What my fate?" So lamenting and thinking some of the submerged bodies might rise to the surface, I paddle myself back to the starting point, but, alas, how changed the conditions; but who shall describe my emotions, mingled with a sense of supreme satisfaction on perceiving a little distance away an object, which on second look I discovered to be one of "The Andromeda's" life boats.

Pushing my way along toward the lately risen life boat, still greater surprise is in waiting, for lying side by side, I behold two unconscious forms. But of whom?

'Tis but a moment when I climb the thwarts, place a hand over the heart of the unconscious captain. Joy, joy, his heart pulses. He is not dead.

I next perform a like ceremony on the unconscious body of the chief with an equally gratifying result,—life is not extinct. My next move was to raise the captain's head, followed by uncorking the flask of brandy, and pouring a few drops down his throat, the effect was marvellous, especially when taken in connection with the rubbing of the

limbs and bathing the temples, for soon his bosom heaves, pulse beats, a long drawn sigh escapes his lips, expectant no doubt in anticipation of another draught of the same generous liquor.

I now turn my attention to the pirate chief, not that I considered him worth the trouble, but simply in the interest of humanity, for I would a duty perform each owes to the other, be he friend or foe, an act be it said that later on I had no cause to regret.

The chief, too, at length regains consciousness, the aforesaid bottle largely contributing to the gratifying result, the captain's jealous eye taking note of my every move.

In weak, disjointed, hesitating sentences, pigeon English, the ruling vocabulary, the fallen chief says, "Me tankee berry muchee, indeed. Ya, berry muchee, for sabeing my poor lifee, an' meebe I do de samee to you sometimee."

"Never mind thanks. True, as you say, it may some time come in your way to do me a good turn, and if so, I shall not hesitate to avail myself of the offer."

"Dat am so, ya, dat am so," the chief returns, a prediction verified to the letter, for I was at one time reduced to straits but little less than those from which I was so lately extricated, the worthy chief acting the part of a generous host, and becoming the very best friend—next to Captain Lighthouse—that I ever had.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A STRANGE PEOPLE.

THE reclaimed warriors having in good measure regained their mental—though I could not say as much concerning their physical—equilibrium, turned to with a will, looking to putting the life boat in seaworthy condition. There was, however, little amiss, the craft having to all appearance suffered less than the deep sea explorers, so on supposition that some one of the submerged bodies might come to the surface, possibly one in whom a spark of life yet lingered, I proposed lying off and on until it was positively known that there was no possibility of more being saved. I was not far away in my surmises, for soon body after body rose to the surface, among which were sailors, marines and officers, but not one was found living.

Another tragedy was on the eve of enactment, for before investigation was fairly concluded, attention was called to an object a little distant, which proved the fin of a shark.

“Not one alone, but a score of fins,” quoth the captain.

“Look,” he continues, “the bloodthirsty monsters. See how they congregate, and still they come.”

The captain was right, for look in whatever di-

rection we might the black, upturned snouts and wide-extended jaws appear, the lifeless remains of our ill fated companions, the magnet drawing them hither. And what a spectacle! The sea for leagues in every direction dyed with the life blood of those by whose side we had so lately battled in interest of rights delegated to every human being, that of self-preservation, but now, alas, food for these ravenous brutes. "The gods have been good and exceedingly generous in thus supplying the needs of the treacherous devils," spoke the captain, responded to by the chief, "Ya, ya, me tinkee so, too, all the samee."

'Twas thus we remained for a half hour, indulging the hope of rendering assistance to some poor mortal, but we found waiting of no avail, the objects toward which our kind offices were directed were beyond human succor, or even sympathy, so finding farther effort useless we turned away, heading in direction of a group of islands, barely distinguishable from the great distance—the rendezvous as we soon found of the foe who had so bravely and persistently attacked us in the early morning.

On examination of our effects an old and partially worn-out sail was discovered in the locker of the life boat, so utilizing an oar in place of a mast, sail was spread to the breeze, our little craft bounding lightly over the white crested waves.

About half the distance traversed, and a flotilla of canoes was observed putting off from shore, heading in our direction, yet, upon arriving within speaking distance, what was our surprise to find them manned by the gentler sex, anyhow, so styled. So I said, "If these be gentle blood, heaven save us

from encountering those that are not so gentle!" Indeed a more repulsive set of wretches it was never my luck—good or ill—to encounter. In thus speaking I, of course, have reference to the elderly females. The younger ones will be noticed hereafter.

On approaching the flotilla I perceived the countenances of the females wearing a woebegone expression, indicative of sorrow, consequent—as I conjectured—on the fearful calamities following the attack on "The Andromeda," whereby the entire male portion of the island community were swept away, save the chief, who was now not only chief, but head and front of the whole people.

Indulging a bit of moralizing I was led to question whether the attributes of love and hate were not equally common to all peoples and tongues, for no matter how high or how low their station in life, the passions seem to hold even sway, and it was the same with this people. Isolated as they were from civilizing influences they none the less mourned the loss of loved ones, and 'twould have moved the stoutest heart to have witnessed the unfeigned grief of these poor degraded souls, who knowing nothing better, assumed it just and right to take advantage of another's weakness, be he friend or foe, and as in this instance, to plunder, and if possible destroy "The Andromeda" together with her people.

Now, that the tables were turned, their grief was uncontrollable. Their lamentations the louder, for prospective gain spoiled, nothing remained to fall back upon, nothing left by way of compensation for the loss of all that was dear, husbands, fathers, sons and brothers, all now at the bottom of

the sea, and here was made manifest the wisdom, one can hardly say forethought, in preserving the life of the chief, for had I obeyed the promptings of my heart, thus leaving him to his fate, the condition of the captain and myself would have been truly deplorable, for in their rage I verily believe they would have torn us piecemeal, without a single grain of remorse, peradventure supped of our flesh, dedicating our well polished bones in peace offering to the gods in expiation for their fearful loss, for their one thought seemed that some offence had occurred whereby their downfall was assured, hence, the more willing to vent their displeasure on that of their enforced guests, at least from their manifestations of anger, I so judged, and it was only through much persuasion, accentuated by threatening gestures from a powerful war club wielded by the redoubtable chief, that we were permitted to pursue our course without farther demonstrations of this nature.

From the foregoing it will readily be seen that our reception on shore would doubtless not be of the most amicable kind, as it certainly was more a matter for conjecture than actual knowledge, for the power wielded by the chief might be so counteracted by influence of his female subjects as to cause his impromptu guests to be laid on the sacrificial altar in justification of their misdeeds.

We proceed, a fair breeze under strong pressure of sail hurrying us onward, until we fairly outstrip our friends of the flotilla, reaching shore considerably in advance.

Tying the boat to a neighboring tree we rest, awaiting their coming, not long delayed, for before

aware of the fact they fly past, the measured beat of sweeps keeping time to a low guttural chant, referring to the late catastrophe in the simple words:

*“Husbands, brothers, lovers all,
Gone to the bottom of the deep,
Shall we stand and idly call,
Or seek revenge before we sleep?”*

“Lines suggestive,” as I remarked to the captain, “of the probable fate of one Captain Light-house, and his friend, Josiah Bartholemew.”

Whereon he likewise of poetical turn, rejoins:

*“Ah, Josiah, the measly ruffians
In petticoats though they be,
They’ll have like the d—l to fight,
Ere to terms they bring us, you see.”*

Our friends of the flotilla having landed, are now to be seen hastening to give their beloved chief greeting, therein exhibiting intense emotions of delight, their countenances—ugly as they are—beaming with joy because he is spared, yet none the less sorrowing for those endeared both by ties of nature, and priestly sanction, at the same time they can scarcely realize the full extent of a loss that can in one sense never be repaired, for there are none left to take the place of those adjudged to destruction. “Yet,” as observed the philosophic captain, “whom do you imagine the beggars mourn for most, Josiah, their late husbands—though I don’t believe a bloody one of them was ever really married—or the plunder it was expected they would receive on conquering

‘The Andromeda’s’ people? To say nothing of the sustenance in the hold with which to fill their hungry stomachs, besides the prisoners whom ’twould so delight their beastly souls to put to the torture?”

“Or, on the other hand,” I interpose, “to fill the place of their defunct lords, for ’pon my word, captain, I honestly believe they’d relish the exchange.”

“We shall see, my boy, yes, we shall see when it comes our turn to be tossed in the matrimonial market to the highest bidder, for so sure as you live it will come to that, and in my opinion it will be about the most severe torture they are capable of inflicting on us poor mortals.”

The island stronghold, or by whatsoever name it was designated, lay some half mile back from the landing place, so the line of march taken up, we journey thitherward, the chief heading the comical procession, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse alongside his majesty, one Josiah Bartholemew, reporter and correspondent, close behind, the female contingent bringing up the rear.

In this manner we proceed, now through a piece of wood or interval of grassy plain interspersed with patches of tropical verdure, until at length the village rises to view.

Entering through a broken down gateway, set in a decayed brushwood fence, the entire populace, wherein are comprised a number of maidens, come forth, all exhibiting signs of grief, for the sad news of the morning’s mishap has gone ahead, thus apprising those left behind that the male portion of the community have at one fell swoop been lost to them forever.

As the captain and myself were the only pale-faces the majority of this people had ever beheld, their curiosity was unbounded, yet, as far as we were individually concerned, there was scarcely any perceptible difference in complexion between ourselves and our copper-colored hostesses, anyhow in so far as I was personally concerned, for I had been so exposed to the sun's blistering rays, it would have been little matter of surprise were I taken for one of the same lineage.

The dilemma in which we were placed was soon overcome, through introduction in character of "Two Big Chiefs" who, through intervention of the gods had escaped the fate of our comrades, hence we were looked upon with increased interest, the fair ones gathering about, in seeming desire to know what manner of men we were.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.”

It was now well on toward nightfall, and as our energies, physical and mental, had been severely taxed, the one compelling a famishing state, for not a morsel of food had passed our lips since the early morning, the chief, on being informed as to our condition, ordered food set before us, which, I am compelled to say, while not in the latest style of cookery, was nevertheless appreciated, and relished accordingly.

The meal finished, we were shown to our quarters, temporary, I hoped, for it was simply a cabin of rough-hewn logs, roofed with twigs and straw, and, while impervious to the sun's rays, was hardly sufficient to turn the heavy rains.

My first act in the approaching drama was to remove the rubber sack, finding, to my great delight, the manuscript in excellent condition, likewise a pair of revolvers it had been my good fortune to secure before leaving the doomed “Andromeda.”

The evening not far advanced, I proposed to the captain a stroll taking in the town, which agreed to, we proceeded to make ourselves as presentable as possible, a bath considered the first thing in order,

confined mainly to hands and face, toilet arrangements not of the first quality.

The moon at the full and a cloudless sky, little difficulty was experienced in making our way along the narrow streets. But wheresoever we went we were beset by scores of women bent on making acquaintance with "these strange beings," doubtless—as some averred—from another world, for it was a positive fact that we were regarded in the light of some distant connection of the gods, whence the conclusion that our captivity would not be overly severe, even if protracted. Another thing in our favor arose from the fact that the younger class of females, especially those ranging in age from fourteen to twenty years, were remarkably fine looking, some even handsome, whereas those of mature years were remarkably ugly.

An instrument bearing strong resemblance to an old-fashioned drum, but in this instance constructed from hollow logs, the ends covered with a species of rawhide, a hideous contrivance enough, at least as far as unearthly sounds were concerned, now came to our ears, the deafening beats echoing and re-echoing from one end of the town to the other, its purpose that of calling the populace together in council; the place for assembling, a large barn-like structure near the center of the village.

Soon old and young were observed hastening thitherward, their countenances betraying an anxious expression, for to them this was an uncommon occurrence, likewise a notable event in their history.

At length, all assembled, the chief rose—a roughly-built platform, raised some three feet from the ground, the rostrum from which he was to speak. This, in more ways than one, remarkable personage, which, later on will become more apparent, had, on a certain occasion been captured and taken to a distant English settlement, where he had been held prisoner for a considerable period of time, and when set at liberty, returned to his native country and town, yet, while absent, had managed to pick up a sort of what is usually styled pigeon English. He had also become quite proficient in the manual of arms, so in the late attack on “The Andromeda” he was enabled to successfully cope with his skilled antagonists.

Later on I learned there were a number of islands, each occupied by its own people, but subject to one rule. The chief, whose life I had fortunately been the means of preserving, was the acknowledged head, to whom all owed allegiance. Yet, under present conditions it is safe to say he (the chief) would practically be the one to give allegiance to his female subjects. “For,” said the captain, “to rule over men is one thing, over women another, as many a one has found to their sorrow.” In the case of the chief demonstrated to the loss of a throne.

This renowned Tanawarga, literally interpreted, signifying “headlight,” was a man of striking appearance, with an eye no wild or captive eagle could put in claim for one more piercing.

I have spoken of this people as of Mongolian origin, but on reflection and some speculation, have finally decided the race as Jewish, possessing,

as they do, the same cast of features, square jaw, high cheek bones, and complexion decidedly swarthy; again, their laws—social, religious and political—are in many respects identical with those of the ancient Jews, in that they invoke the good offices, not only of the one, but many gods. From the facts as set forth I am of the firm opinion the ancestry of this people are not only remote, but date away back to the very beginning.

Chief Tanawarga now arising to address his people, prefaces his remarks by invitation for the captain and I to be seated on the rostrum, then exhorts his subjects to treat the strangers in a kindly manner. "For," said he, "they come to us with the reputation of brave men. Moreover, from personal experience, I know them to be valiant warriors, testifying to the same from having been eye witness to the one and feeling the effects of the other. The young chief by my side, pale though he be, was surely a chosen instrument whereby the gods preserved the life of your ruler. Therefore, I again say, treat him with kindness, both he and the gray-beard."

A gentle wave of the hand, signifying silence, and every eye is fastened on the beloved chief, in waiting to catch the words that fall from his lips.

It could hardly be expected that I repeat the address verbatim, nor in the style of language as delivered, the unlearned chief's disjointed, broken sentences precluding a full report. Nevertheless, it is not too much to say that every line was replete with good sense, therein evidencing careful preparation, and betokening the man he would have been if the recipient of a fairly good educa-

tion. It was his closing sentence, addressed to us, which caught my wandering attention and filled me with cold horror: "See to it then ye take good care of these, our stranger guests. The one, because he did so contribute to the preservation of the life of your chief, I make Manager-in-Chief of Island Affairs; the other, because he was an honorable foe, and among his own people a doughty warrior, I commission Lieutenant. And now, that ye may be satisfied with your lot, I hereby grant permission for ye to choose from among the women as many wives as are to your liking."

Upon Tanawarga finishing, my heart, as on many another occasion, nearly stopped beating, for on the instant—framed in an aureole of golden locks—appeared the well-known face of one Julia Everingham; a still, small voice whispers in my ear: "Josiah Bartholemew, beware of the Serpent," sentiments appealing not alone to the imagination, for I was ere long to be confronted by the stern reality, not only whispered, but in good, sound Anglo-Saxon, that while there is no objection to one wife, there are a multitude of reasons why there should be no more than one.

Tanawarga, finishing his discourse, admonishes his hearers to return quietly and circumspectly to their homes, then and there to make adequate arrangements looking to the comfort of their guests, so that it was but a little while when all were to be seen wending their way homeward, many, like Lot's wife, looking backward in interest of the paleface strangers, the minds of the female subjects all at sea when contemplating the significant words of their notable chief, expressive of his re-

gard for their welfare relative to the choice of husbands. My own source of anxiety hinging on the preservation of the prized manuscript, and, while I might possibly be overworried in respect to its safety, I was not a little annoyed at the thought of its publication being indefinitely postponed.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TROUBLE AHEAD.

I HAVE now a tale to tell of so strange, unexpected and startling a nature as to tax the credulity of the reader, peradventure discredit the sanity of the relator, but, before commencing the story I must state the conditions in which I was placed, giving rise to the following problem :

Given ten score maidens of marriageable age and corresponding proclivities. On the other hand two middle-aged men and one young scribe. What the result? A problem it would seem of easy solution, until one was brought to the task, when the verdict would be the one word—"Trouble!"

It so chanced on a certain morning that I strolled quite a distance from the village, my mind fully engrossed in pleasing contemplation of the future, that same Julia Everingham coming in for the largest share of my thoughts, the while in wonderment as to whether, weary of long waiting, she might not have transferred her affections to another, if, indeed, she had not taken it into her head to marry some other good-looking fellow. And even were such the case, I could hardly find it in my heart to complain. 'Twas thus I meditated, when all of a sudden my reverie is broken, a voice

in sweetly modulated accents chirps, "Josiah, dear!" the voice followed by the form and easily-recognized features of Tanawarga's youngest daughter, Hab-a-sha. And oh how my heart beats on her approach, for she is indeed a beautiful girl in that her form is of the most exquisite proportions, head crowned with a wealth of golden tresses, face of rare beauty, graced by a sweetness of expression I have never seen equalled in any human being. Yet, I was forced to the conviction it concealed a spice of deviltry, possibly treachery. Ah, the same old Serpent. But then came the thought, "Am I not subjecting the most winsome of maidens to unjust, maybe harsh, criticism?" And so, as I afterward found, it was, for of all human beings, she was one who deserved praise, rather than censure.

A notable feature of this maiden lay in the singular fact that while her sisters' hair was dark as night, hers was of the color of native gold; her skin fair and eyes intensely blue. So, with all these noteworthy attributes, it is hardly a matter of wonder she should be sought after by the young men. Rather, had been, for there were none now to make love to the winsome daughter of the renowned chieftain. Thus as sole representative of the younger class of the male element, it will be at once perceived that I was in an awkward dilemma, or, as warned by my late ghostly mentor, "in a dangerous predicament."

Without the least hesitancy or maidenly reserve she advances, takes my hand—more perhaps in salutation than forwardness, for this was a common custom among this people—bestowing thereon

a gentle kiss, followed by the romance: "My pale-face friend, the whole morning have I sought thee, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, but always with the same result, until I strayed hither, not in the least expecting I should find you in this secluded glen."

In explanation of the foregoing strange scene I would take occasion to remark that the maiden had, unperceived, followed hard on my steps during my morning stroll, hence the denial as to my whereabouts was simply subterfuge, for, as I soon after learned, she had been an attentive listener during the entire interview with the "Old Hermit," meantime evolving from her fertile brain a certain scheme whereby to bring me to terms, thus captivating my affections. At least, 'twas so understood at the time, subsequent developments confirming me in the supposition. Truly a noteworthy object, and one that might have carried had I not been forewarned. Nevertheless, the maiden was, to all intents and purposes, in active preparation to open fire; bright eyes the weapons, honeyed words the ammunition; I, Josiah Bartholemew, the target toward which the weapon was aimed.

As I was about to reply I was suddenly confronted by a vision, proving, however, a stern reality, for appearing on the scene were one, two, three, yea, a full score of dusky maidens, faithful subjects of Chief Tanawarga, who, unseen, unsuspected, had crept through the wood and were now to be seen in a body with evident intent to forestall my affections in opposition to their equally ambitious golden-haired sister, Hab-a-sha.

On appearance of the intruders the chief's daughter with a cry of dismay, perhaps jealousy, threw herself on my breast, twined her arms about my neck, then in whispers said: "Josiah, my friend, have nothing to do with those ignorant black-a-moors, they are not worthy thy notice, indeed they are not."

Hearing the uncomplimentary terms wherewith they were recognized, the so alleged black-a-moors, —taking the cue, sprang forward with evident intent to seize the offending maiden, and now, what in the name of my innate modesty, was I to do? Capitulate, throwing down my arms—so to speak, would be to expose the maiden to danger, indeed I've no doubt she would have been torn piecemeal, so angered were her enemies, so gently disengaging her arms from my neck, I lift up my voice in expostulation and entreaty, both tinctured with a little judicious flattery. Said I, "Most lovely and winsome offspring of a great chief, why, let me ask, so demean yourselves as to take advantage of my absence from your beautiful city, obtruding in this uncalled manner on my privacy? Why, friends, while it hath been my exalted privilege to watch over your interests with the same assiduity that I have over those of the entire community, it grieves me sorely to find you in this unpleasant state of mind, hence, I am forced to make appeal to your usual good judgment, and in all kindness ask if it be not unseemly to thrust yourselves unbidden on me in this out-of-the-way place?"

"But a few moons since I came to you an entire stranger, meantime I have left no stone unturned whereby I might do something tending to your

benefit, moreover, it hath been a source of unwonted satisfaction to note the improvement manifest in the various walks of life, particularly the acquirement of knowledge, to which end I am pleased to note, you have applied yourselves with vigor, and now, why attempt to undo that so happily begun?

“Cease, then, I implore, cease this uncalled for wrangling, which, I am positive you will when I give the unqualified assurance that to your sister—Hab-a-sha—I lay no other claim than that of pure friendship, for I am positive it would be considered an act of downright impudence to attempt to win the affections, or even sue for the hand of the daughter of so august a potentate as Chief Tanawarga. Such, then, being the case, how unwise to attempt placing obstructions in the pathway leading to usefulness, thus the betterment of a people in whose welfare I have ever taken such a deep interest.”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN A QUANDARY.

THE close of the last chapter saw one Josiah Bartholemew in an unpleasant predicament, yet, after his presumed quieting address to the belligerent faction, he was more than astonished upon hearing the words, shouted in chorus, "Send the tow haired one along, and we'll do your bidding," this in response to my having urged return to their homes, leaving me to pursue my way in peace.

It scarcely needed the prescience of a seer to inform me that the golden haired daughter of Tanawarga was the bone of contention, so, urging her to return, along with her less favored sisters, she again threw herself on my bosom entreating me to turn a deaf ear to the alleged claims of her jealous rivals.

Here was a quandary indeed, and just what to do I knew not, for that a storm was brewing, which might eventuate in a tempest of no mean proportions, I greatly feared; however, those of the maidens most worthily inclined accepted the advice, and were now to be seen wending their way homeward, while the majority still insisted "the tow haired one" be delivered over to their hands, in which event "they would soon bring the shameless jade to terms." And notwithstanding all my,

efforts directed to keeping the peace I was soon surrounded, the thoroughly aroused maidens continually shouting, "Give to us the tow haired one," yet, 'twas scarcely a matter of doubt, that could they change places with the much-abused maiden they would not for a moment hesitate, such is the perversity of human nature,—*i.e.*, complaining with the same things we would gladly do ourselves—and now instead of angry words came furious blows, and while I fought hard, exchanging blow for blow, in effort to shield the obnoxious maiden, she was eventually torn from my embrace, and had I not on the instant put myself strongly on the defensive, striking out right and left, the poor girl would have certainly lost her life, for nothing short of a miracle could have protected her from the fierce onslaughts. So finding my efforts in the main unavailing, I at last surrendered, promising in case they desisted from farther outrage of this scandalous nature, I would accompany them, for it was in no other way their minds would become disabused of the notion that on Hab-a-sha being freed I would join hands with the hated rival, an act, be it said, that under no conditions would the Amazons tolerate. So after a little farther parley it was mutually agreed to abide my decision, the company starting homeward, my fair friend in disgrace sent to the rear.

Something more than half the distance traversed,—the maidens in seemingly contented frame of mind, for the bone of contention out of the way, nothing seemed to trouble them,—I made an unwise remark in that, "Did a like scene again occur Chief Tanawarga should be immediately in-

formed of their pernicious conduct, in which event he would undoubtedly take immediate steps looking to his favorite daughter's interests, likewise my freedom from insult."

On the point of entering an explanation relative to the meaning of the statement, as above indicated, I was again furiously set upon, a war of words the weapons by which I was attacked, until at length the tumult raged to such an extent that I almost wished I was within hearing of the metropolitan police of my native city—"London-on-the-Thames"—for in no other way was I able to see my course clear. Staying the tide of rebellion, once set going, is a difficult matter, for no one knows when it will be quenched. More especially so was it in this instance, for when one has men only to do with, it is much easier to resort to harsh measures.

Again, in chorus was shouted the significant words, "Chief Tanawarga, forsooth," his beloved daughter the while surveying the tumultuous scene in tearful silence, for she dared not say a word in either defence or expostulation.

"Aye, you may well call on Chief Tanawarga," again arose from the multitude, then in continuance, "Best be not dilatory about it, forasmuch as he will be chief but little longer, anyhow, so thou, Josiah Bartholemew, but say the word in which event the doughty monarch will, without loss of time, abdicate,—but whether or no in thy favor remains to be seen—nevertheless thou wilt be crowned king in his place, and so quickly, thou wilt scarcely have time to ask 'wherefore.' Yea, Josiah, thou art destined to reign in lieu of Chief Tanawarga."

“Dethrone the renowned chief? He who hath stood my friend in time of so great need? He, who at all times and seasons has sought the up-building of a hitherto downtrodden people? Dethrone your king? I reign in his place? Why, what in the name of the gods mean you? Really, I cannot understand it.”

The young anarchists, in earnest consultation, now put forward a tall, robust warrior,—principal instigator in the late tumultuous uprising—who without hesitation or circumlocution urges her claims as follows:

“Friend Josiah, thou in thy simplicity doth question the acts of these my friends and myself, in the words, ‘What mean you?’ Well to be plain and outspoken, I answer the question by saying, As thou well knowest, Chief Tanawarga is getting that old, ’twere better he be looking the ground over for a last resting place wherewith to deposit his decrepit bones; therefore, it is the opinion of these my counselors, concurred in by myself, that he no longer be permitted to hold rule over a young and vigorous people, even if composed wholly of females, moreover, a younger chief we would have, because such a one would naturally be more in accord with the new régime soon to be inaugurated, and put in force by thyself, and for the specific reason that thou art the one peculiarly fitted to carry out the principles of the one, and put in force the provisions of the other. Dost understand? if so, then know this also, that we propose to submit to no further dictation from Tanawarga, or for that matter anyone else, hence, it is our settled purpose to make choice of our own ruler. And, Josiah

Bartholemew, thou art the one on whom the choice has fallen."

"Since when," in much perturbation of spirit I enquire, "was such decree settled?"

"Yesterday eve the momentous interview was held. This morning the mooted question decided, coincided in by the entire assemblage," whereon the first speaker again says, "'Twas for this, and this alone, thou wert followed this morning. Tanawarga's daughter, 'tow-head' though she be, didst anticipate our coming, so followed hard after thee, thinking thereby to frustrate our well laid plans, but the gods with us, who, Josiah Bartholemew shall prevail against us? Therefore it was for this the measure was determined on, which, in thy misconception of terms, thou didst stigmatize as 'foolish and uncalled for.' Dost now comprehend? Aye, thou must see wherein we were misjudged, wherein thy usual good judgment didst come near failing thee, in order to give place to thy overweening egotism that never fails when imagining 'twas thy susceptible heart we were striving to captivate rather than thy non-susceptible head—and that's the long and short of it, Josiah Bartholemew,—coming ruler as thou art, we I trow should be objects of thy sincere regard rather than enmity." "And honor as well"—interposes another, taken up by the first speaker, "Notably when on the point of being crowned king to rule over a people, composed altogether of the weaker element, eh, Josiah?"

"Weaker element, indeed," retorts the other. "Where in the name of the gods will you find a stronger?"

Upon hearing these stirring words in which it was plainly visible business was at the bottom,—rather than sentiment,—I saw how I had misjudged them, as 'twas put, “in my overweening egotism,” so I was for the time being as one spellbound, for which reason I could say nothing in answer. The first speaker coming to my relief, rather dismay, for she spoke in no uncertain tones, “Sir king, why answereth thou not? Art tongue tied? Methinks 'twere well—if such be the case,—thou seek to unloose the unruly member, else, perchance, like another ‘find thy kingly occupation gone,’ so we urge thee to find speech whereby to acknowledge the honor conferred, at the same time find fitting words to return thanks for the high consideration shown in thus making it possible to take seat on a throne, whereon many an eminent monarch hath heretofore sat, moreover, a throne established long ages ago, and so ably maintained by the now fallen Tanawarga. Speak, Josiah Bartholemew, if but a single word, in assent. This we demand as our right.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TANAWARGA DETHRONED.

DURING the foregoing interview and colloquy the female conspirators accompanied by their unwilling candidate for kingly honors, were to be seen wending their way toward the village, where, on arrival, I immediately betook myself to official headquarters, the while firmly resolving to acquaint the unsuspecting chief with the designs of his rebellious subjects, hoping thereby to stay the tide so strongly setting in against him, but like many another I found I had reckoned without mine host, for preceding me by a good quarter of an hour the malcontents were in force ready to squelch any incipient signs of disobedience to their powerful will, to which end I was admonished to retire to my cabin home, and there make preparations for forthcoming events, whatsoever they might be, but of which I was assured I would receive due notice.

In reply I urged the necessity of time for reflection, because a question of such overshadowing magnitude should not be lightly considered, nor hastily acted upon.

After no little demur at the proposition the request was finally acquiesced in, accompanied by the

adjuration, "Best look to thy ways, Josiah, for we are in no mood for trifling, besides it will be for thy interest to say nothing to Tanawarga relative to the situation. Indeed, every eye will be upon thee, thy every action noted; however, when thou shalt have assumed thy rightful place not one of us but will acknowledge thee ruler, and we the ruled."

With this injunction followed by the sensible affirmation, the female strategists take their departure, leaving the prospective ruler a prey to the most conflicting emotions, for what, I am forced to urge, can the deposed ruler think of my outrageous conduct? Surely, it would be hardly possible to think otherwise than that I was in the plot to dethrone his majesty, peradventure prime instigator, of an element seeking to lay claim to a throne, as declared by the scheming faction "founded and maintained by a long ancestral chain of a noble race."

Indulging reflections of a somewhat unsatisfactory nature I was abruptly called to a realizing sense of the situation by appearance of a delegation of female warriors detailed as guard to the chief's daughter, along with myself, the one that no opportunity be afforded for communication with the soon-to-be-deposed chief; the other excluded me from speaking with the chief's daughter, as in either event the disloyal element might find their well laid plans disarranged,—to say the least,—however manifesting little show of uneasiness in that I was deemed a fit subject for espionage. I hastened to the cabin, finding the captain laboriously occupied, striving to solve some abstruse problem, as he said, "Referring to governmental affairs

as connected with doings in Mongolian waters," so on entering the cabin I was saluted in the words put in form of a question, "How many moons, Josiah, since 'The Andromeda' set sail on her voyage of discovery?" So in true Yankee fashion I answer, "Oh, about a dozen, I guess; but what do you mean when you speak of the voyage as one of discovery, when I had all along been given to understand it was to give the Mongolians a thrashing?"

I now rehearse the story of the morning adventures, the unseasonable appearance of the female element, who, meditating a move antagonistic to the stability of the reign of Chief Tanawarga by seating one Josiah Bartholemew on the soon-to-bevacated throne, had unnoticed followed me to the wood.

At the close of the last sentence a slight rustling was heard outside the cabin, whereupon I throw open the door, when a female figure is seen taking hasty departure.

"Aha, under surveillance, it seems. By heaven! this is carrying things with a high hand."

We slept but little, the captain and I, on this memorable night, in fact, made little pretence that way. On the contrary, the whole night through were deeply engaged in consultation, until at length, after summing the whole matter up, came to the conclusion 'twere better to let nature take its course, for we were utterly powerless to change the current of events, or in any manner whatsoever contribute to the maintenance of Tanawarga's seat on the throne.

Early on the following morning I suggested the advisability of seizing the arms, but on making the

attempt, what was my dismay, to find the arsenal closely guarded, sentinels stationed both front and rear, who on our approach gave us greeting by prolonged cheers, and derisive laughter, one of the rebels sarcastically saying, "You didn't think to find us up this early in the morning, but, good sirs, please remember this, if nothing else, that the women are never caught napping when there's work to be done, so we unhesitatingly say, better go about your business, leaving your betters to attend to theirs without your interference, for, as you cannot help but perceive, we hold the key to the situation." So arguing from the standpoint of diplomacy, we were not slow to take advantage of the generous offer, hurriedly returning to our quarters, the movement perceptibly hastened upon noticing a half dozen muskets pointed in our direction.

Said the captain, "Were one of those ancient weapons to be accidentally discharged the shot would either fly wide of the mark, else take us in the rear, so I think we had better hurry out of range," whereon, taking up the subject, I enlarge on the text, by replying, "He who fights and runs away, or runs without fighting, as in our case, will without doubt live to fight another day."

Remaining quietly in camp for a short time, the quietude mostly on the part of the captain, for I was in a state of mind bordering on distraction, from the fact that I was so soon to become the recognized potentate, my subjects, without exception, of the feminine gender, my attention was called to a delegation of warriors numbering a full score, a tall, statuesque figure in lead of the column seen to file along down the winding street. The

column armed with spear, sabre and musket, form in line, taking station in front of the cabin, when the captain thunders on the outer door with the hilt of a sabre, demanding—in the name of the gods—instant admittance.

Not being aware the higher powers were about to take a hand in the management of affairs, I was inclined to demur at the idea of the conspirators calling on the gods for help, when they were seemingly so well able to help themselves, nevertheless, I said nothing, but turned to my companion quoting the words, "'Tis the way of the world, especially when holding the balance of power." Then, as quickly as possible throw the door wide open, the bold leader, without so much as "By your leave," strides bravely along to where I was standing, then and there demanding instant answer to yesterday's request.

"Aye," breaks forth another, "instant answer is demanded."

"It seems, worthy friends and doughty warriors, that demands take precedence over the more courtly usages of domestic life, particularly in framing one's method of articulation; however, I am not disposed to question the right to the use of the one, nor demur at the other, so please accord they unworthy servant the privilege of saying that he feels himself quite incompetent for the discharge of duties whereof he has had no experience, nor does he feel like assuming honors heretofore worthily borne by the renowned Chief Tanawarga, yet, laying all this aside, circumstances over which I have no control, seem to urge me onward, compelling answer to your demand in the affirmative. In

other, and plainer language, I hereby accept. Do with me as you see fit."

"Rather in hesitating language, I should say." Then to her waiting soldiery in overjoyed tones she cries, "He accepts, yea, our unanimously chosen sovereign unconditionally accepts. Faithful, loyal comrades, Josiah Bartholemew—and we have it from his own lips—doth convey to a charitably inclined constituency the glad tidings that he willingly, gratefully accepts the high honors incident to a throne at this very moment in readiness to receive his august majesty, so, my friends, cheer. Aye, three upon three, let us give to the new ruler."

The above order complied with, with several additions, each of my female constituents advances and bestows on either cheek a rousing smack, followed by the acclaim, "Long live our noble king," then, at the word of command, the column right about face, and file along the road leading to official headquarters, where it was expected the deposed monarch would be in waiting.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE NEWLY CHOSEN KING.

NOT having received the least tidings that he is to be superseded, and that by an almost entire stranger to himself and household, likewise of an entirely different lineage, Tanawarga, upon being confronted by those whom he has always esteemed his warm friends and obedient subjects, now in this supercilious manner demand his abdication, willingly, or otherwise, is in a state of mind anything but enviable.

While all this is going on the newly created monarch,—whose rule—supposedly absolute—embraces a wide extended group of islands, and the ruled, a notable body of women, more than a thousand in number, is at this particular moment lazily outstretched in the circumscribed limits of the little cabin, alongside, one Jeremy Lighthouse, late commander of Her Majesty's frigate "Andromeda."

All of a sudden the door is thrown violently open, when, with dishevelled locks, countenance suffused with deep emotion mingled with fear and apprehension, who should appear but the late Chief Tanawarga.

Entering, he looks enquiringly about the apartment as though expecting to see some one of his

rebellious subjects, but failing, turns his attention to his successor in kingship, and in loud sounding tones exclaims, "What, sir, is this I hear? Can it be possible that Josiah Bartholemew, and thou, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, should be in league with those she-devils, or do my ears deceive me? Can it be true, the story I hear? Oh, no, it cannot be, those I have so unselfishly befriended, and to whom I have become so strongly attached, should on the first opportunity presenting, turn against their benefactor. Yet, whether or no, I would a few plain words with you, and more to the point, those words will be the truth.

"Dare allow yourselves the thought I would tamely submit to such an unheard of outrage? Thereby sacrificing a throne sacred to the memory of those heretofore seated thereon? A throne never before in jeopardy. Ha! thou little knowest with whom ye have to deal!" Then with downcast eyes, heaving breast, deep drawn sighs, the poor dethroned monarch gives vent to agonizing groans, whence I could but think his acts belied his rather pompous words. These emotions, however transitory, subsided as quickly as they came.

Soon resuming his former attitude of bravado, he shouts, "By the gods above and the devils beneath, I'll never, no never, abdicate a throne so long upheld and ably supported by a long ancestral chain, therefore, my friends, I call upon you to assist and sustain me in this the hour of adversity, preserving intact my threatened rights. Aye, rights delegated by those to whom the word traitor was unknown."

At this point in the chief's stout pleading I felt

it my duty to disabuse his mind of the notion that I had taken part with those seeking his downfall, so I replied to his agonized words, saying:

"Esteemed friend, twelve moons since you gave succor to both myself and my good friend, Captain Lighthouse. It is not my province to remind you of the imminence of the peril by which we were surrounded, and that you hesitated not in striving for our deliverance. A little time previous, however, by the help of the gods in conjunction with a certain rubber attachment, my life was preserved. Now, how is it that you accuse me of conniving with your female subjects looking to your dethronement? Nay, on the contrary, I am at this moment ready to lend you assistance, do thou but show me the way. But, Tanawarga, what in the name of the gods can we do, powerless as we are to ward off threatened danger, and I might add, helpless as thou art in the hands of these female miscreants?

"Again let me say to you, Tanawarga, that I have reasoned, entreated, and even threatened, but of what avail, for they reply to my persuasions, 'Out upon thee, Josiah Bartholemew, don't be a fool, even though nature did intend you for such a fate, for now, that it comes in thy way to make a man of thyself, why not fall in with the current, and quit this arguing, for we, as the people, are in no mood to put up with vain blustering, on the contrary, do thy duty as laid out, 'tis all we ask.' And, Tanawarga, they go still farther, and say, 'When it comes to threatening, thou dost reckon without thy host, for in no case will we forego that which in thy insufferable egotism thou art pleased to style "foolhardiness." ' And so, when in the early

morning a deputation appeared urging acceptance, I resisted to the best of my abilities their overtures, begging them to desist from attempting to carry out the hazardous scheme, but again they say,—and that with vehemence—‘We are fully determined on our course, therefore ’tis no use for you, Josiah Bartholemew, to stand in our way.’ Farthermore, seeking to obtain possession of the arsenal it was found closely guarded, admission thereto under whatsoever pretence utterly denied, therefore, O worthy Tanawarga, what could I do to stem the tide so powerfully setting against thee? And I am of the firm conviction that the insurgents thoroughly in earnest and well organized as they are, in opposition to thy natural rights, and in my interest, rather in their own—for I have no part nor lot therein—therefore, such being the case I should unhesitatingly advise immediate abdication.”

“Which advice signifies thou refuseth to help me,” interposes the chief.

“Not so, worthy Tanawarga, not so, for I am not only willing, but ready to turn to your aid, but I am positive ’twill be of no avail.” The last sentence barely falling from my lips when shouts, drums beating, rattling sabres, clashing spears, accentuated by the roll of musketry, and cries, “All hail the new ruler, long live our noble king.”

A hasty glance from the window reveals a brilliant array of female soldiery coming toward the cabin at double quick, which they seem bent on razing to the ground, that I might have no excuse for longer tarrying in that quarter, but better advice prevailing, they desist, draw up in line, the leader at the top of her squeaky voice shouts:

"Come forth, Josiah Bartholemew, come forth and show thy manly form. Yea, let this waiting assemblage gaze on the one who is about to take the oath of office in interest of a throne he is soon to grace, likewise assume the prerogative of ruler over a multitude of 'the fair sex,' who are only waiting to give greeting to him who is on the point of being endowed with kingly powers."

The whole column taking up the refrain, "Yea, come forth, for we would on the instant proclaim thee king."

Beholding these demonstrations of loyalty and good will in interest of the newly created sovereign, also hearkening to the shouts of approval, Tanawarga, completely broken down, and losing courage, fell prone to the ground in an agony of grief. Rallying, however, he weakly said, "Thou mayst compel abdication, but in no other way wilt thou gain possession of the throne, for I will under no circumstances or conditions yield obedience to thy demands," then about to continue, he is quickly confronted by the eager soldiery, who, at command of the leader, lay hold of the fallen chief, thus compelling him to desist from farther repining, on pain of instant arrest.

Notwithstanding these demonstrations of disloyalty to their oncewhile king, the chief attempts farther entreaty, but before a single sentence is framed his voice is drowned in cries of anger, groans and hisses.

Ah! mused I, the blessings of an advanced stage of civilization are not only apparent, but about to find lodgment in the minds of this people, fair application of the adage, "Where ignorance is

bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," for until our appearance these islands were harmonious, but now, from effect of a little enlightenment they are found in the throes of incipient rebellion.

I was soon recalled to my hazardous position and attending responsibilities by hearing voices in contention, Tanawarga's drowned by a multitude in chorus, "We care not to listen to words from a deposed ruler, for of a verity, Tanawarga, thou art but as one of us, merely a subject, so please comport thyself accordingly, comforting thyself by the reflection, 'Whatsoever the gods do will, in that must I be reconciled.'"

"The gods, you say. Devils rather, and she ones at that," interjects the dethroned king.

"Hist, Tanawarga, blaspheme not, neither forget that so long as ye choose to obey our commands, so far will it be well with you. Disobey them, loss of liberty, dungeon and chains thy portion."

"Usurp my functions, take away my liberty, fetter with chains my body, threaten my life you may, but tie my tongue you cannot, nor will I willingly submit to dictation from such as thou, by giving place to another," cries the aged chieftain, as with head erect and dauntless mien he stands face to face with the maddened throng, who, inclined to take him at his word, are on the point of ordering his arrest, when with a leap and bound he clears the crowd, fleeing to an adjacent wood, but ere a half score steps are taken he drops to the ground, the report of a musket telling the sad tale of a noble life sacrificed on the altar of expediency,

not the first time in the world's history like scenes have transpired.

In hope, rather than expectation the shot had not taken mortal effect, I hurry to his assistance, but too late, for ere I reach his side he has drawn his last breath.

Thus, at the hands of a people it has been his aim to serve with fidelity and truth, perishes one of the most noble, self-sacrificing souls it has ever been my good fortune to know. While I, Josiah Bartholemew, at one bound am raised to a throne, and such a throne, such a people!

Search the world over, was ever a like scene witnessed? And now came, when too late, the thought, should my female subjects at some future time take it into their heads to serve me as they have just done their former beloved chief, where would lie the difference as between him and me? Cogitations of this or any other nature came to a speedy ending, for instead, the word of command came to my ears, "Chief Bartholemew, without a moment's delay repair to government headquarters, then and there take the oath of office."

Line of march again taken up, we keep step to beat of drum and squeaky fife, songs from a thousand throats rising in the still air, the words in chorus running:

*"The king is dead, long live the king,
This fact to all the world proclaim,
Then shout and likewise sing,
'Twas only done by might and main."*

Upon arriving at government house, my inauguration is without the least delay commenced,

though with little ceremony, after which all adjourn to well furnished tables, where a "feast of reason and flow of soul" is for a time indulged. In point of fact it was a generous banquet in honor of the new sovereign, who stands before his people in attitude of a newly fledged monarch, hoping to bear his honors meekly, for assuming censorship over the female element alone 'twas not to be wondered at that I felt myself unequal to the task, and now were heard the words, "Our king, a speech from the king," so rising in my place, I proceeded to address the admiring throng as follows:

"Kind friends,—and as I trust—loyal subjects, in entering on the duties attending the exalted station to which I have been called, mainly, as I believe from appreciation of services in the past, I desire to call attention to this one fact, viz., in interest of good government, I shall expect to be unto you a law, my every act to go unquestioned, for, and I say it in all kindness, in no other way can the wheels of government move with due regularity and without friction, therefore, whatsoever measures it may be thought best to adopt, will as I trust be accepted without question, hesitation, or criticism. Farthermore, it is my wish to be able to call on you at any time for counsel," this received with shouts of approval, for it is a noteworthy fact that the female portion of any community are never more happy than when solicited for advice.

"Hence, in our consultations, I deem it best that a proper regard be had for system, to the end that all our efforts be directed in channels most conducive to the general welfare of the community, therefore, be it known that I, Josiah Bartholemew,

duly elected king, do hereby confer on our mutual friend and co-worker, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, the office of Lieutenant-Governor, his commission to date from the present moment, so, Governor, will you please take a seat on the platform, that all may take note of the honesty depicted on thy rugged features."

I next selected a commander-in-chief of military forces, with power to choose subordinate officers.

It was my settled purpose to place my people on thorough military footing, on the principle, I suppose, "In time of peace prepare for war." Not that I feared my little army would be called out in interest of "foreign invasion," but rather in interest of self-protection, as in the case of Tanawarga, who would have been able, were a police organized, to put down the late rebellion, for—as I argue—the fires of rebellion once kindled, it is a hard matter to quench the flames thereby engendered, so I deemed it essential to be backed by a force adequate to put down incipient stages of rebellion, come in what shape they may.

The funeral obsequies of the late chief were faithfully performed, due regard paid to the memory of one who had so long filled the highest position in government, his last resting place a little mound in rear of the government buildings, where a monument has since been erected.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SEATED IN HIGH PLACES.

It was now my fortune, whether good or bad, to find myself seated on a throne established in interest of one Josiah Bartholemew, but whether firmly or not to be determined hereafter, yet, entrenched, as I was led to believe, in the hearts of a people whose welfare was my chief concern; a people who, by their own free will, had honored me with the highest position in their gift without a dissenting voice, therefore it was my province, as it was certainly my choice, to so steer clear of the shoals and quicksands of statecraft as to avoid the interminable jealousy, inherent in feminine nature, and could I bring about the desired result my mission would not have been, to say the least, a failure.

To this end I was willing to bend my every energy, at the same time heed the injunction laid upon me by my ghostly visitor, viz., "make no outward show of preference," surely a difficult task when taking into account that I was already half in love, and daily becoming more and more enamored of the fair maiden's charms. At the same time it stood me in hand to make use of a large amount of circumspection in my affairs of the heart, else

I might just as well consider my reign of limited duration.

'Twas thus passed days, weeks, months, until three years have expired since the ill-fated "Andromeda" set sail on an expedition wherein my fate was so largely involved, and whereto have culminated my being placed in possession of a throne on which have at different times sat descendants of an ancestry dating away back to the very beginning, whereon I was led to the reflection—"On supposition that blue blood counts, why, in goodness' name, am I not head and shoulders above many of the most exalted of the world's potentates?"

Some prophetic spirit must surely have given the Lieutenant-Governor warning that trouble was in store, for going his morning rounds he afterward gave me the assurance that mutterings savoring of discontent were rife, from the fact that in my selection of government officials I was in the habit of "showing preference." As to myself, however, I had neither heard or seen anything to cause uneasiness relative to affairs not being on good footing, so rallying my friend because of needless alarm, I gave him to understand his fears were utterly without foundation, of this I was positive; going still farther, I accused the captain of being fully as bad as the women folk, forever borrowing trouble if it could not be otherwise secured.

"Maybe you are right," he returns, "at the same time, while adhering to my belief, I would advise keeping a weather eye on the beauties, forasmuch as you hope to retain possession of your throne, so must you be prepared for emergencies that may chance to arise, and take my word for it, you are

liable at any hour of the day to hear the significant words: 'Josiah Bartholemew, the keys! Please deliver to us the keys!' And, your majesty, they'll be in earnest about it, too."

Preparations were now made for a trip to my outlying possessions, a project at one time discussed, but abandoned for the time being, but again revived by the procuring and stowing on board a little sail craft provisions for a three-days' voyage, together with such arms and ammunition as were deemed necessary for protection from wild beasts, whether human or brute, though as to the former we had no fears, for, aside from my own people there was not, to my knowledge, a human being within many hundred miles. So, on a morning just before sunrise, we shoved off, the whole community of people witnessing our departure, though it had not been my intention to make it a public affair; in fact it was a part of my plan to keep it a secret in order to test the captain's prognostications of evil. But, apprised of the fact, all, both old and young, were at the landing place in readiness to bid us "God-speed" and "bon voyage," though nothing said of safe return, in itself enough, one would think, to create suspicion, and had I at the moment comprehended its significance, it might have caused our remaining at home, else contributed to speedy return.

The breeze was fair. The boat's sailing qualities, while not of the best, were equal to the breeze, so a few hours' sailing carried us within hailing distance of the shore of one of the principal islands, wherein was comprised a part of my princely heritage. And now at this late hour came

the unwelcome thought: Why have I in my thoughtlessness entrusted governmental affairs to the hands of the very one to whom I should not; otherwise, my Secretary of State, the fair Hab-asha? For what better opportunity to wreak vengeance on an innocent victim? And if taken advantage of, why not at the same time overthrow the Government by taking possession of the throne? Alas! I have much yet to learn before becoming a skilled diplomat, especially when the duties wholly pertain to a nationality of women. "Fair and false," a name given to the sex; would it prove applicable in my case? I knew not, but as things stood, I could only wait and hope for the best.

Swiftly revolving these weighty problems, my mind in a whirl of excitement consequent on the thought of my fair enchantress being exposed maybe to insult, or even danger, I was soon awakened to consciousness and the Governor's dulcet tones by the worldly exclamation: "Rouse up, my hearty! Have your wits gone wool gathering? Else, why this oppressive silence? But I say, your majesty, do you know we are nearing the island, and in about five minutes will have touched shore?" In less than the allotted five minutes, however, our little craft glided into a land-locked harbor, the silent waters of such transparency that objects could be plainly seen a long way beneath the surface.

Lowering the sail the Governor takes to an oar, a few gentle strokes sending the boat alongside a moss-grown bank, then stepping ashore we are soon in readiness for our inland journey, mid-day finding us well advanced, and as the air was uncom-

monly sultry we came to a halt under the wide-spreading branches of a dark-colored cypress, whereon the Captain produces a well-filled lunch basket, afterward pipes, which smoked, we resign ourselves to much-needed rest. The Governor to sleep, I resuming my wearisome speculations relative to my jeopardized throne and longing for a glimpse of "the girl I left behind me." Meanwhile, my good friend's forebodings of ill coming upon me with redoubled force, I fall to cursing the folly that led me into such a fearful predicament, and now, left to myself, I would have turned back without the least hesitation. Indeed, I was in a state of mind analogous to that of Orimentides when giving ear to the Serpent's syren voice—"Which the most to be desired, the delights of Paradise, or going contrary to the wishes of the Master?" Indeed, I was in a mood to welcome even my friend "The Hermit," for if there was ever a time that I needed counsel, ghostly or otherwise, 'twas at this precious moment. Again, if my subjects cannot be depended upon in my absence to behave themselves, better know it at once and take measures accordingly. Yet, taking this sensible view of the case, I did not anticipate the startling scenes ere long to be encountered.

Thinking my friend, the Governor, had been sleeping quite long enough, for a long distance was yet to be traversed before night should have set in, I gave a shout that started him to his feet with the remark: "For the Lord's sake, Josiah, that was enough to raise the dead, let alone the living. But, I say, those she devils are upon us; better look to thyself before it is too late," then giving

a hasty glance around, silently commenced strapping his knapsack preparatory to resuming the journey, making excuse for his hasty language because his mind was so fearfully harassed by imaginings of impending calamity that it was hardly the thing to be held responsible for his inane utterings.

"Well, Captain," I rejoin, "let us drop the worrisome affair, and if the worst come to the worst, why, we cannot be held responsible, nor will it do one particle of good to worry or fret about it."

"For a verity a wise thought and a seasonable suggestion, so here goes." Taking up his staff, we resume our travels, pushing ahead, our pathway leading along low, wooded hill-sides, here and there some dilapidated, nearly obliterated habitation—now a cabin, lonely, deserted; there a field yet bearing marks of the plow, choked with rank-growing weeds, others overrun with luxuriant growths of tropical vegetation. Thus in genial converse we pursue our journey until the waning light announces the approach of night. So we halt, arrange our belongings and retire to rest, the Lieutenant-Governor to peaceful, unintermittent slumber, while as to myself, I could neither sleep nor rest, until, nearly worn out, a broad pencil of light gives token of early morning.

A hurried breakfast and we resume our journey, our way leading along and up a chain of mountainous heights, for it was my settled purpose to take an extended survey of my island possessions. It is but little time, however, before we enter a dark, gruesome defile leading upward, still upward, mid-forenoon finding our steps tending

toward a precipitous range that, from all appearance, had never before been trod by the foot of human being: indeed, a wilder, more desolate, forbidding region it had never been my lot to encounter, nor was there the most remote trace of habitation, on the contrary, nature in all its magnificence of gloom, held undisputed sway. For which it seemed hard to account, considering that this was the most ancient known portion of the globe, the original dwellers, according to the Old Hermit's story, "one of the lost tribes." The hour for the noon-day meal arrived, but when on the point of being commenced a wondrously strange thing happened. First, a weird sort of chant, in tones surprisingly familiar, the refrain at the ending of each couplet: "Josiah Bartholemew, beware, yea, beware, for thou art but little way from the toils of the Tempter."

"Aha! Heardst thou this?" in dismay I cry, the last word sinking to a whisper. To which the captain replies in his customary vein: "'Pon the word of an honest old salt and the saints combined, the ghostly old fraud still sticks by you, for 'tis he, I reckon, singing that infernal gibberish." Yes, I am positive 'tis he, come to give warning, but look in whatsoever direction we would neither ghostly nor material form could we see. Nevertheless I was thoroughly convinced the owner of that voice must have habitation in the clouds, now fast gathering overhead; yet to solve the mystery it was proposed we hasten up the steep declivity, which feat accomplished, we find ourselves at the entrance of a rock-bound cavern, but so deep and darksome did it appear that it became a de-

batable question whether it were safe to enter. So for a time we remain stationary, until at length the weird voice again comes to our startled ears: "Josiah Bartholemew, beware, for ere thou art sensible of the peril thou wilt have surrendered to the wiles of the Tempter."

Upon hearing these last words, without further hesitation we plunge ahead, regardless of what may lie in our pathway, the cavernous gloom enshrouding us as a funeral pall.

Thus pursuing our course, we enter an apartment, seemingly hewn out of the solid rock, but its immense proportions suggested the idea of a natural cavern, whereupon the Captain, in sentimental mood breaks forth: "Behold Nature's charms scattered about in the utmost profusion; and who shall venture the opinion that in this splendid outlay those charms be not quite exhausted, as witness a wide hall of immense length brilliantly illuminated, from either side depend glittering stalagmites, while thickly scattered about are to be seen nuggets of virgin gold, and, more astounding than all else, on a high, uplifted throne, clad in garments bedecked with priceless gems, diamonds of the first water, massive head on which rests a crown gorgeous in the extreme, reclines a form, but whether of terrestrial or celestial mould 'tis hard to determine. But to make the affair still more perplexing, at this richly-endowed being's side, in easy, unconstrained attitude, the right arm familiarly resting on the proud monarch's shoulder, stands a most beautiful maiden, in appearance some eighteen years of age.

CHAPTER XL.

MY WITS STILL AT LOGGERHEADS.

How shall I describe this beauteous maiden? Though were she of earthly, rather than heavenly mould, 'twould be an easy task, but, gifted from realms above, as she appears, 'tis hard to do. Not knowing the one from the other, however, I will, in my ignorance, make an attempt in this wise, to wit: Form faultless in contour, generous of proportions, chestnut locks built up about a shapely head in massive coils, countenance in expression singularly sweet, cheeks on which were blended in about equal proportions the rose and lily, soft brown eyes, lips full and ripe, delicate and well-proportioned hands, fingers on which were rings set with pearls, feet encased in golden-wrought sandals, while over the entire form was loosely thrown a garment of crimson velvet. Indeed, a queen in her own right was this, the loveliest of all maidens.

But, can this personage seated on a throne of such rare splendor, can this, I say, be my friend of ghostly fame? Aye! it must be he. Else why his speech so very like? Why the countenance so familiar—except a more youthful look—hence, if correct in my diagnosis, time must have come to a halt in my friend's favor. I have but little time,

however, to indulge these strange fantasies, for I am quickly recalled to myself and surroundings by a voice: "Josiah Bartholemew, I have taken it upon myself to direct thy steps hitherward to the end that we hold conference, never, unless circumstances do so warrant, to be renewed, and, as in the past I have given thee both counsel and advice, so do I again, yet, as before said, maybe for the last time. Dost ask why? Because I am about to depart for another field of operations, maybe to another and distant planet, also to another people, my mission to do the will of the Master—a people, be it said, to whom I am no stranger, because they have many times before beheld 'The Old Mountain Hermit.' Moreover, I would have you to know that my labors are not confined to this diminutive sphere, but embrace many of the larger planets, yet, ere I take my departure I would a few words with you, to the end that you may be enabled, in part at least, to comprehend many things which thou dost not as yet know concerning a future life.

"Having, on many another occasion and other circumstances, shown that there is a future, not only to human beings, but all that draw the breath of life; also proven to thy satisfaction that I am as I claimed, 'the First Born,' I now desire thee to know this maiden fair, on whom thou art disposed to look so kindly, is none other than my maternal ancestor, Orimentides, whose child while in the flesh I was. The maiden on whom thine eyes do at this moment rest, the fairest of all beings, terrestrial or celestial; whose hallowed remains went down alongside those, the most renowned of

ancient world characters, who do now, and forever will, have habitation in the spirit world, is mine own mother.

“As thou dost now behold the fair creature, so was Orimentides when first from her Maker’s hand. Canst wonder the rare loveliness here displayed didst so contribute to her husband, Orimentes, meditating flight when first beholding her? Doth wonder that he should fall an easy victim to such powerful temptations? For who would not do likewise under the same conditions? Hence, as I’ve oft-times warned thee, beware of the Serpent! in proof of which I will now show to you the fair one as she appeared shortly after exchanging the felicities of Paradise for a world of sin, wretchedness and woe.”

The last sentence barely uttered when the cavern becomes steeped in gloom, almost total darkness prevailing. But an instant later the gloom passes away, succeeded by an illumination causing the stalagmites to glow with their former pristine vigor, the gem-encrusted walls gain their accustomed brilliancy. But what is this I behold? And on whose face do I gaze? A female form. True, yet how changed! A face once of rare loveliness, but now, alas! full of sorrow.

In tones of the deepest solemnity the voice of the occupant of the throne utters the one brief sentence: “Behold what sin hath wrought!” And well might this be said, for in lieu of beatific vision in the garb of virtue; in place of crimson velvets, gems and precious stones, behold, bowed, weeping, utterly cast down, a poor, forlorn, grief-stricken

creature. Thus, all her beauty gone, who so poor as to do her reverence?

The fiat has gone forth, the die cast, the poor, miserable, cast-off creature banished from Eden's glories. She is bid "Depart!" a world sin-cursed, sterile, barren desert to look on her coming and glory in her shame, for now the most wearisome toil barely sufficing for meager subsistence; the Master's curse follows her every footstep. Indeed, she is now the most forlorn and to be pitied creature, human or brute, on the face of the earth.

Is all this a dream? an illusion of the senses? Is yon proud monarch, his throne outvying all I've ever before heard of barbaric splendor? Or is he a magician, skilled in the arts of jugglery? Else, as he would have me believe, is he really "the First Born"?

While the scene as mentioned was transpiring, my eyes meanwhile riveted on the strange pair, the form of Orimentides dissolves, melting away in thin air with not the most remote trace remaining to show that she was once there. The golden throne, however, keeping its place, likewise its strange occupant, while words are again heard proceeding from the latter: "Josiah Bartholemew, and thou, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, place on record what thou hast both seen and heard, for I wouldst thou bear witness that both are simply manifestations of supernal power. At the same time remember those whose existence in the mortal hath ceased do take on spirit forms, wherefore I do most solemnly affirm those who went down in the "Andromeda" are now at thy side, and 'tis through their influence and special desire I have thus re-

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concocting some scheme whereby to string up your corporate anatomy to the topmost bough of the first handy tree, else toast both over a roasting fire, blast 'em!"

"Nay, nay, Captain, you're too dismal by half in your prognostications. On the contrary, they'll have killed, dressed and barbecued 'the fatted calf in readiness for the arrival of the 'prodigal son.'"

Thus reassured the Captain's philosophic reasonings tending to allay my fears—then, too, I could not fail in remembrance that the "Old Hermit's" premonitions, whether of danger or its opposite, had proved eminently trustworthy. Farthermore, I was positive from his manner that he was keeping something back, which I later found to be the case, much to my gratification.

CHAPTER XLI.

RETURN TO THE CAPITOL AND ITS RESULT.

NIGHTFALL fast hastening on, it was deemed best to remain as we now were until morning should have arrived, when we would hasten our return, but the whole night long I could not sleep; I hardly dared think, for if things at home were as represented, my return would be hailed with anything but joy. Nevertheless, upon the approach of morn we were astir, and making our way along down the mountain side, reaching the place of embarkation along toward mid-afternoon, only to find our little craft missing, and, search as we would, nowhere could it be found, nor anything pertaining to it save a rag of sailcloth probably torn from the mainsail in securing the boat.

“Our designing enemies, taking advantage of our absence, have doubtless taken possession and paddled ‘their little canoe’ over to the opposite shore,” suggested the Captain, who, according to his usual wont, let fly a rousing oath to accentuate his feelings, for he swore by all that’s great and good, “’Twas a blasted shame to leave the ruler of a kingdom, along with the Lieutenant-Governor, in such a predicament,” and I naturally coincided in his views.

By surprising good luck, certainly not fore-

vealed affairs common to the spirit world; farthermore, through their pleading I now convince thee wherein thou hast done a grievous wrong by placing on the throne one who, at this moment doth in spirit guise implore thee to be guided by her counsels, for in her abiding love she would shield thee from anticipated peril.

"Look you, Josiah! See, she advances, she takes the place vacated by Orimentides. But look, I beseech!" When on the instant, as affirmed, she appears, taking station at his side, an expression of anxiety, blended with compassion, suffusing her rosy cheeks.

Again speaks "The First Born": "Josiah, this, thy good angel, hath purchased thy life at expense of her own, for it was either her life the forfeit or thine in expiation of thy foolish doings; thus in accepting the first alternative she has met a fate which, by all the rules of justice, should have been thine, therefore, I do solemnly vouch for the fact that never was so great love ever before manifest in the flesh. Let this, then, to thy dying hour be a lesson, that when thou first show preference for one of Orimentides' daughters, then do thy troubles have beginning, and where they will end no finite being hath the least knowledge."

Lost in reverie I remain for some time, scarcely knowing what to think, much less how to act, for the proceedings had been of such an extraordinary character as to defy the most astute reasoner in attempting to work out a problem where everything was so shadowy, and yet in many respects so real. I am soon, however, recalled to a realizing sense of the phenomenal condition of affairs by hearing

a sound suggestive of swiftly turning wheels. Not in the least suspecting whence the noise proceeds, I am about to make enquiry, when, casting my eyes aloft, a still greater surprise awaits me, for I perceive the golden throne in all its glittering paraphernalia, the materialized spirit of the late chief's daughter—all have vanished, nothing left save he who so lately sat enthroned in state. In short, all things pertaining to former grandeur have, as by the magician's wand, totally disappeared.

I rub my eyes, stretch forth a hand, pluck my auburn locks in hope rather than in expectation of finding out whether I am, as purported, the aforesaid Josiah Bartholemew, king, not of the cannibal islands exactly, though unless things take a decided change for the better I will not be king at all, else materialized counterfeit of the aforesaid. Nevertheless, casting my eyes in the direction of the Captain, I am pleased to find that astute gentleman in a like state of bewilderment, as evidenced by again resorting to the ruse of scratching his head, probably to awaken some long dormant attribute, whereby to solve the difficult problem, else some less worthy, but none the less useful object. However, managing to regain, at least partially, his ordinary faculties, he tremblingly articulates: "Josiah, my boy, let's up and away, but first help me with my knapsack; then let's hurry, for I am more than persuaded those she devils are raising the devil, to say the least, and if you want to keep possession of your throne you'll have to make haste, for I wouldn't be in the least surprised if your 'faithful subjects' were at this moment

sight, I had, just before starting on the cruise, taken possession of a hatchet, strapping it to my knapsack, so that 'twas not long before a raft was well under way and ready for sea shortly before sunset.

On the Governor's proposal to wait till morning before setting sail, I at once negatived the proposition by saying: "No, my dear Captain, let's be off at once. For if, as suspected, enemies are awaiting us at the capitol, why, the sooner we confront them the better."

Raising a pole to which was attached the dilapidated rag of a sail, and all things in readiness, the shades of night falling fast, we were away, my threatened rights the loadstone impelling us toward the island village. Meanwhile, a stiff breeze springing up, fair progress is made, break of day finding us within sight of the town and now in view of anticipated strife. I could hardly contain my feelings or restrain my impatience to confront my rebellious subjects—alas! mine no longer, I much fear, the "Old Hermit's" prediction coming on me with redoubled force. I was in full expectation of finding my people, through factional strife, rent and torn, for was I not thoroughly assured that she whom I had left in charge was brought to me face to face? How, then, could I indulge the faintest hope that I was ever again to resume my old place in the affections of my people? For, of this much I was morally certain, either that I had been outrageously imposed upon, else the prediction verified.

"A conjuror's trick, Josiah, a conjuror's trick. Of this you may be certain," speaks the Governor.

At the same time I was just as certain there was a malicious smile hovering on his lips.

The cabins sighted, we plunge onward until at length an exclamation from the Captain, though he tries hard to smother it: "Holy Moses!" But gets no further, for on the instant from the topmost pinnacle of the capitol, waving in the breeze appeared the "Union Jack," followed by a rolling volley of musketry. But what means this martial array? as in compact columns the female soldiery file along the wood-bordered highway, keeping step to "The Girl I Left Behind Me," then draw up on the sandy beach, ground arms and await my coming. But what their purpose, kindly greetings or hostile reception? Ha! Do my eyes deceive me? Nay! No deception in this, for arrayed in plain, though effective garb, in her hand a staff from which wave the kingly colors, appears Tanawarga's fair daughter, Hab-a-sha. Enthusiasm, born of hope, impels me to shout as never before: "Long live the Queen! long live my faithful subjects!" At word of command muskets are brought to the shoulder, and as the raft touches shore a volley rings out, and along with the waving of banners a shout goes up: "Welcome to and God bless our noble king!"

Upon witnessing a demonstration so heartily given in my favor I could hardly repress a cry of joy, nor contain myself sufficient to acknowledge in adequate terms the unexpected greeting. However, a few grains of prompting from the Captain in the words: "Brace up, my boy, everything is all right, just as I said it would be"—the old fraud—tempting me to exclaim:

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“Aha! old sea dog, there’s something in the wind, and, as the ‘Old Hermit’ would say, ‘Best look to thyself—I would say—for as between you and me, accounts will some day be squared and final settlement made.’”

It had now become quite evident, indeed I was fully convinced that I had been the innocent victim of a stupendous piece of fraud,—to call it by no stronger name—yet how the conspirator-in-chief could without my knowledge or connivance, have been enticed to the mountain cavern, was something hard to conceive, yet it was quite plain that in overweening confidence, and a larger share of egotism than commonly falls to mortals in the flesh, I was the butt of a huge joke, so my mind was quickly made up to return the compliment at an early day, and in my friends’ own coin.

At length we are landed, when hand shaking is freely indulged, and under existing circumstances I could have taken each of my female subjects in my arms, so elated was I at this home coming.

Again the soldiery form in column, take up the line of march, soon arriving at the capitol, where another surprise awaits me, in shape of a bountiful repast.

I need not hesitate to say that both “His Majesty” and the Lieutenant-Governor did ample justice to the feast, for we were in nearly a famishing condition, our usual allowance for the past day or two having been somewhat limited.

Judging from the conciliatory ways and kindness manifested, I was inclined to the opinion my people were trying to make amends for the anguish of spirit and solicitude accruing from the scurvy trick

played on their beloved ruler, though I could hardly think they were privy to the outrage—for each and all now vied in endeavor to make my home coming all that I could have expected, or even desired, anyhow, I argued that it was useless to indulge in misgivings as to the future stability of my throne.

Notwithstanding these evidences of respect and loyalty, I was well aware that it behooved me to be on my guard, for, as the “wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth,” so was my estimate of female character, one day here and another day there, and now a thought in the highest degree suggestive, to wit, “Hath all gone well during my absence?” answered by a staunch adherent, “Shortly after your majesty had gotten well under way a minor faction took up arms. Swearing by the gods and your good name, ‘They would never, no, never, be subject to woman’s rule, much less to that of the hated daughter of Chief Tanawarga.’ The threat going abroad, indeed, it was openly promulgated. Hab-a-sha ordered the long roll sounded, appealing to those delegated to stand by one whose authority was unquestioned,—to assemble at the capitol grounds, also as many of the malcontents as chose to do so, and after all were gathered the maiden proceeded to address the multitude in the words:

“‘Friends, it deeply grieves me to find so many disloyal subjects, and why, let me ask, do you, so soon after the king’s departure take it upon yourselves to rise in rebellion? Why thus attempt coercion against one deputed by the king himself to reign during his limited absence?

“‘Hath our good friend,—our worthy father’s successor—done anything to cause this outbreak, or hath anyone of you been wronged? If so, why not wait the king’s return, then present your grievances,—if so be you have any, which I must doubt—anyhow, hath not his majesty through worthy deeds proclaimed an abiding interest in your welfare? Hath he not by much sacrifice sought in every way to better the condition of his people? Why, look about you and see the wondrous change wrought, and by his hand alone? Thus in lieu of poorly constructed cabins, now, well furnished, comfortable habitations; instead of skins stripped from the back of wild beasts for clothing, now, spun and woven garments.

“‘In place of meager crops, now, well filled granaries; instead of ignorance and illiteracy linked with its hand-maid superstition you have a considerable amount of knowledge, all these tending to gentleness of spirit and kindly ways, and now in view of these manifold blessings how can you so demean yourselves as to raise the standard of rebellion in opposition to one who hath done so much for you? Hence I conjure you lay down your arms, retire to your homes, and the word of a notable chief’s daughter if you have honest grievances, Josiah Bartholemew, in rôle of king, will gladly hearken, and cheerfully redress any wrongs you will with good proof present.

“‘Away then to your homes, and let me not again hear of any more proceedings of this character.’”

CHAPTER XLII.

LOOKING INTO MATTERS.

IMAGINE the delight and unqualified surprise when listening to the sensible words flowing from the lips of one it was my delight to honor; moreover herein was confirmed my previous estimate relative to her exalted character, yet how little did I suspect the inherent nobility so conspicuously displayed on an occasion demanding the utmost forbearance and gentleness, yet with a firmness 'twould be of value for others to imitate.

The admirable address concluded, the malcontents lay down their arms, acknowledging the error into which they had fallen by not having viewed the subject in a proper light, and now that there seemed no good reason why a course inimical to the weal of the community in general, and the good name of a ruler of their own unfettered choice in particular, why should they not return to their allegiance?

The history, as above related, was told me by one on whom I could rely, so I again questioned her in regard to the missing boat, thus leaving the captain and I at the mercy of the elements without shelter of any kind, nor food, upon which she re-

plied. " 'twas simply a part of the scheme to delay your return, so you would not be likely to oppose the rebellious faction because you would have no opportunity."

Determining to give my people to understand that having again taken reins in hand, likewise possession of the throne and all the name implies.—I must perforce be considered the ruler, and they the ruled.—so I promulgated an edict setting forth my views regarding governmental functions, also what might hereafter be expected,—in other words, unqualified obedience to whatsoever demands I might see fit to make. Farthermore, should any be inclined to question my publicly expressed views thereby tending to stir up strife, or in any manner seek to foster revolutionary notions, I should without hesitancy take prompt measures to nip sentiments of that nature in the bud. In fact, and to sum the matter up, incipient stages of rebellion were to be immediately quenched, even though the people were crushed, so I issued a mandate summoning my people to gather near the front of the capitol on the following afternoon.

From the foregoing it will be seen how nearly right were my friends, the Governor and the Old Hermit, in their efforts to eliminate from my addled brain that overweening thirst for power which seemed to take precedence over everything else, and never more ardently displayed than when pressing my ambitious design on a people who during the long reign of Tanawarga had at all times a warm place in his affections, at the same time accorded privileges which in my insufferable pride I was seeking to destroy.

The hour arrived, and the populace were to be seen in all directions hastening toward the rendezvous, some in eager questioning, others manifesting a large amount of expectancy, while all were in evident suspense, for not one understood the significance of the call.

CHAPTER XLIII.

I MAKE A SPEECH.

ALL unconscious of the before-mentioned excitement I proceed to the capitol in all the conscious serenity of well doing, and when all is in readiness I take my fair friend by the hand and lead her to the front, in full expectation of delivering my address, but, alas, how mistaken I was, not having beforehand gauged the temper of my auditors, hence illy prepared for the reception that awaited me, for I was immediately assailed by all manner of the most hideous noises, mingled with hisses, groans and cries of derision, along with utterances of too scurrilous a nature to be easily borne.

“Ah,” thought I, “here’s civilization with a vengeance,” and to say that I was startled upon witnessing this singular demonstration, particularly coming on the heel of the late royal welcome, would but feebly express my emotions, in fact, I was completely dumfounded, yet, had I fully realized my position before this people, and taken steps accordingly, matters might have been so patched up as to give me a longer lease of kingship, to say the least. But as it was, I was in no mood for temporizing, so I again perform an act in the tragedy that must for all time redound to my foolhardiness. This

foolish act preceded by the thought, "These manifestations of hatred, from whatever source arising, must now, and forever after, cease, and what is more, shall not in my august presence be countenanced," so arising in all the dignity of an assumed potentate I once more commence to speak, by saying, "Friends and subjects," but am the second time brought to a halt by another storm of hisses, to which I pay not the least attention, but keep on, "I am sorely grieved to find my people in this unamiable mood, indeed, I had good reasons for thinking to have an altogether different reception.

"What, let me ask, has been done to call forth these expressions of dislike, and even hatred? Nay, not the latter surely—for it is impossible for me to conceive that enmity is harbored within your breasts toward one who has since his coming among you had your best interests at heart, therefore, I am inclined in the belief some evil minded person has been sowing seeds of discord in your midst, else why this outbreak of scorn and derision? Have we not always dwelt together in peace and harmony? Hath anything been done or said militating against the peace of the commonwealth? If not, why so turn against thy chief?"

"Chief indeed!" rose from out the dense mass at my front, "best recall that hasty word, for, Josiah Bartholemew, if peradventure chief now, thou wilt be so but little longer."

Still unheeding these querulous outbursts, I resume,—rather, so attempt,—when a tall, statuesque figure on my right interjects, "Your august majesty, I would a question propound,—but will first ask why thou canst believe thy subjects are an-

gered? Yet providing such be the case, for what good cause?

“Cause, forsooth, when thou wert warned, and forewarned. Of what? Ha! thou dost wince. The thrust was too deep to suit thy tender feelings; wherefore I repeat, thou wert both warned and forewarned, yea, and admonished, but to what end? Are these mine sayings enigmatical, then look backward, taking note of thy previous utterances, and explanation will be forthcoming. Ah! thou may well turn pale. It best suits thy sallow complexion, but to the point, as aforesaid, thou wert warned that in thy dealings with us,—I had it on my tongue end to say thy people—thine no longer I trow—thou wast not to show preference. Didst thou not make solemn vow to heed this injunction? How hast thou kept the promise? Simply by breaking it, and now, in thy humility, thou would ask in what manner? For answer, by placing the crown on the head of one for whom thou well knowest we have no love, scarcely esteem, aye! one whom from this time on we will entirely disown, even if thou hath the hardihood to present her in the name of ‘queen,’ and yet, you ask, ‘Why are we angered?’ but let me say to thee this,—and ’tis in which all are agreed—throw this, thy favorite overboard, attend faithfully to thy duties, patterning after the notable chief, the late Tanawarga, ‘Showing no preference,’ and we will take up allegiance, acknowledging ourselves as heretofore thy willing subjects, thus at all times ready to obey thy slightest wish. On the other hand refuse these generous offers of reconciliation at thy peril, remembering we deal not in idle threats.”

Like unto the fool I was, I returned threat for threat, but ere I had said a half score words, I was abruptly brought to my senses by the word of command, "Right about face, present arms, take aim, stand fast as ye are."

Turning to the right what was my dismay to find a platoon of female soldiery, in the hand of each a loaded musket, aimed directly at my heart.

Anticipating the next command "fire," I hesitate but an instant, for death at the hand of my subjects was not pleasant to contemplate—I raised my hand as signal that I surrendered, thereupon the word was passed along the line, "He surrenders. Ground arms, right shoulder shift, face to the left, forward march." Then again to the "Girl I Left Behind Me," followed by "The Rogues' March," I was drummed out of camp, the music executed by fife and drum—better, I thought, than on my devoted head.

The platoon again take up line of march, file along down the dusty highway, wheel to the right, countermarch toward where I am standing, then at signal from the commander of his royal majesty's forces, stack arms and proceed to bind my unresisting hands. "Out upon you for a lot of heathen,"—in my indignation at the iniquitous outrage I impulsively shout, "What think ye to make by taking this unheard of course?"

The only answer to the appeal, "Remove yon caitiff to the guardhouse," whereupon I was seized and dragged to the lockup, there left to chew the bitter cud of fancy free. Sentinels were immediately stationed both in front and rear of the log

prison, thus precluding any attempt to escape, had I any thought of so doing.

"Less sumptuous quarters have been assigned to more renowned monarchs than I, and with even less hope of rescue," as throwing my weary form down on a bench,—the only article of furniture in my prison—I soliloquize, then resign myself to the inevitable.

Indulging these not over-pleasing reflections relative to my lost estate, a bundle of straw, the couch whereon I rest my weary limbs, all around my prison cell, peaceful and quiet. The sentinels' light tread mingled with a confused hum of voices, all that I heard. Until all of a sudden the clash of arms came to my ears, accentuated by the marshaling of troops. Their commander's voice in wrathful accents proclaiming, "Avast there, shipmates. What in the name of Moses have ye done with Josiah Bartholemew?"

"Fair question, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, honest answer shall be given, in that it is our desire you take the place of one who by his own doings hath nearly undone that we have been so long striving to do, viz., preserve harmony in our midst."

"'Pon the word of an honest sailor methinks ye are over hasty in your conclusions,—to say nothing of the imprudence involved—for look you, ladies, I am neither by birth nor education, and I might add, experience—fitted for kingly duties, nor am I at all disposed to have charge of a government run wholly in interest of the fair sex, composed as it is of an intelligent, beautiful and altogether lovely constituency."

The doughty Captain was doubtless bent on a little sarcasm, at the same time adding a modicum of flattery as an offset, so continuing:

"Having for many years followed the sea for a livelihood I've had little opportunity, and less desire, to become proficient in governmental duties, and while I've commanded ships of war and of peace, I've never hitherto been called to officiate in capacity of ruler over a whole people; moreover, while I duly appreciate the high honor you would confer upon me, I must beg to be excused from the onerous duties pertaining to, and attendant on lofty positions, carrying with them, as they always do, tasks of the most thankless description."

"Thankless indeed," from a score of excited voices. "Methinks thou art the one to return thanks, for we do assure you the task is only destitute of thanks, when the object of regard merits the scourge rather than praise. Yet be this as it may, 'tis not for thee to say whether to accept or decline the exalted honor lying in our gift, and within thy reach, for in that we have the power, so do we command strict obedience to the request."

"When is the said demand to be put in execution?" asks the astonished candidate.

"On this very instant do we demand acceptance, immediately followed by being seated on the now vacated throne."

"Well, well, so be it," returns the victim, more in sorrow than anger, be it said—a sudden thought coming to his relief suggestive in the highest degree, so soliloquizing, he continues, "Blast 'em, I'll make it warm for the jades, I'll give ye all the government ye'll need, and more than you'll want,

else my name's not Jeremy Lighthouse," then aloud to the anxious auditors, "But when and where am I to begin?"

"To the first we answer, immediately; to the second, precisely where thou dost stand."

"But," again questioning, "are there no ceremonies attendant on my upward flight to glory, no inauguration ceremonies befitting the occasion? No ball, no dancing, and the like?"

"Make not light of thy forthcoming exalted station, 'tis of too serious moment to indulge in uncalled for pleasantries, wherefore, but say the word, and a deputation to escort your majesty to the chair of state will be in attendance."

"Away, then, to thy domiciles," commands the newly fledged sovereign, "and whensoever it doth please his royal majesty to accord audience with his subjects, due notice will be given, meantime I will select my sailing master, boatswain, ship's carpenter, and other high officials as may seem necessary, giving notice to all concerned, so I again order thee 'begone,' let me see no more of ye until such time as it may be my good pleasure to give summons."

Thus the—to all outward appearance, though inwardly chuckling—wrathful monarch takes, as he believes, the wiser course, resolving to submit to no half way measures, on the contrary, give his subjects at the outset to understand that nothing short of the most implicit obedience to his mandates would suffice.

These commands,—though seemingly rigorous, struck the right chord, as evidenced by the assemblage going their several ways without a murmur,

because satisfied with the new order of things, and it may well be questioned whether it is not an actual fact that the so-called weaker sex are never more happy than when favored with a master whose rule though strict, never verges on the effeminate.

Night was fast approaching, as evidenced by the gloom and darkness enshrouding my prison, settling in corners and cranny holes of the cabin, yet I still clung to my bed of straw, a prey to agonizing emotions, the thought coming home with redoubled force:

"How long, oh, Lord, how long, am I to be a victim to this outrageous conspiracy? How long left in this suffering condition, hunger and thirst contributing to my tortures, intensified by pain from the hempen cords binding my wrists, sinking so deeply into the flesh as to make the pain almost unbearable," so one can easily conceive into what a state of mind I was fast verging.

Thus was my condition, thus I lay on my bed of straw, meanwhile hovering between sleep and wakefulness when I am startled by the door creaking on its hinges.

Raising my head, I perceive a form enter, close the door, and quickly glide toward me. But who the stranger? Ha! 'tis no stranger, the voice is too familiar; she speaks, I recognize my best friend and sweetheart—Tanawarga's beloved daughter.

"Alas," she moans, "how is it I find thee in this miserable condition?" were the words falling from the dear one, yet before I gain courage to answer the question she draws from her girdle a sharp bladed knife, which, with quick movement, she severs the cord binding my wrists, then throwing herself in

my arms, ejaculates: "Josiah, dear, before many hours have flown thou shalt be liberated from bonds and prison, also this ignoble people shall before long wonder what has become of their onceswhile chief. But I must away, for I hear footsteps coming this way."

With stealthy tread she hurries away, the deepening shades of night contributing to passing in safety the sentinels' sharp eyes.

Once more the door is thrown ajar, a voice in harsh accents and less agreeable tones than those to which I've just been listening, speaks: "Josiah Bartholemew, these rigorous measures doubtless seem uncalled for, peradventure degrading, especially to one of your sensitive nature, yet 'tis but the penalty paid for thy consummate foolishness,—I might as well say idiocy—so Judith and I have taken the liberty to call on the dethroned monarch for the purpose of looking after his health, and enquiring as to how the exchange pleaseth him. Ha! ha!"

"Oh! bother health, exchange, suffering, misfortunes or anything of like nature, or that cometh within range of thy capacity for ill doing," I cry in my indignation. "Best depart the way ye came, and leave the unfortunate victim of thy wrath to shoulder his own burdens, which such as thou, if ever so well disposed, could not lighten, and which I well know are foreign to thy errand."

"Not humbled yet, rebellious fool? Best jot this down in your book of record, that a time may come when the lively tune you now play will be changed to one of slower movement, and withal more solemn. Then will you go down on your

knees, imploring pardon for your misdeeds. Dost imagine 'twill be granted? If so, little dost thou understand the temper of thy late subjects,—though of the gentler sex they be, Heaven spare us if they be tenderer than thou; but we will now take leave, as thou didst suggest, then if in mood to hearken to our sayings will perchance return.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CAPTAIN PAYS ME A VISIT.

MY female tormentors having taken their departure, I feel greatly relieved, and now all is still save the measured footfalls of the vigilant sentinels, nor is there anything heard or seen, not even my prison walls, for the darkness—unrelieved by crack, window or door,—is total.

On appearance of my nocturnal visitors I had risen, but now that they have had the kindness to depart I again betake myself to my pile of straw when soon afterward a heavy footstep comes to my quickened ears, accompanied by the hasty challenge of the guards. "Who comes there?"

"Best drop those infernal shooting irons," the response. "Best stand aside, for your ruler would pass unquestioned." When immediately arms are grounded, the salute given, followed by the words, "Pass in, your majesty," and before I had time to ejaculate, "My God, the Captain!" that noteworthy gentleman, and now regal sovereign, stood before me in all the glory of a crowned king, his bulky arms entwined about my neck.

"Hold on, kind friend," I exclaim, "though a sailor hug, 'tis far too powerful for my tender anatomy to withstand."

"Ha! ha!" he laughingly rejoins. "'Pon my

word, Josiah Bartholemew, tender! No doubt 'twould be more to your liking were the arms of your beloved Hab-a-sha about your neck. But I say, my boy, how fares it with thee?"

"Fare and be d——d," I return. "But to tell the honest truth, I'd like nothing better than to have the Old Hermit put in an appearance and scare the daylights out of those she devils. Why, do you know, Captain, I've just had a visit from a precious pair on the plea of enquiring about my health, the idiots."

"Yes, and what's more, you've received a visit from one you would hardly stigmatize with an epithet of that flavor. But I say, what on earth are we to do? And now to be plain spoken, I am not in one whit better plight than you, for to attempt to govern a lot of women—well, the best I can say is, Good Lord deliver us.

"The fact of the matter is, Josiah, some scheme has got to be contrived whereby to escape a thralldom worse if anything than death, hence this visit."

"Your hand upon it, Captain, and 'twill go hard if we do not accomplish it, for I can assure you I am in like mood, and will do all I can to further the object, for to be freed from those who manifest so little gratitude for services rendered must certainly redound to anyone's credit."

"But I say," interjects the Captain, "have you eaten anything this evening?"

"On the contrary, not a morsel of food nor a drop of water have I tasted since early this morning, and it is but a few moments only since my arms were relieved of these fetters."

"Ho, there, without, fetch food and drink for this, thy captive king, nor linger long in the fetching. Dost hear?"

"You see, Josiah, I am fulfilling my agreement with your rascally persecutors, and before they get through with their new king they will be only too willing to look on our departure with a pardonable amount of equanimity; in other words, a more congenial atmosphere, take knowledge of our advent."

Food and water were soon forthcoming and ravenously eaten, after which we went to work concocting some scheme whereby to checkmate our captors and thus effect deliverance; my friend, the Captain, from his onerous duties as pertaining to royalty, I from captivity, perchance death, for, as the monarch said:

"I have overheard mutterings of discontent wherein you, my boy, were to be the victim. But by all saints in heaven and earth we will checkmate them yet; yes, 'pon my word, Josiah, we will bring the huzzies to grief, the tyrannical brood."

"But how? That's the question, for you must know it will be no child's play."

"How to get away? By boat," the laconic reply.

"Yes, but don't you see, every avenue of escape is closely guarded, so I am of the opinion I have a better plan, anyhow safer. This people, as you are aware, are mightily taken with anything that savors of invention, therefore should I say: 'Friends, I have of late become acquainted with a method whereby the air can be safely navigated.'

Why, Captain, they will fall in with the notion without questioning or hesitation.

"Again, I will say to the leaders of the town: 'Relieve me from these bonds, thus affording opportunity to carry out the contemplated scheme, likewise lend a helping hand.' I think the question of escape fully answered."

"But in what does this grand discovery consist?" the Captain solicitously enquires.

"Nothing more, nothing less than an old-fashioned balloon, your majesty. Yes," I continue, "let us construct a balloon, attach it to the bow of a small boat, one of our staunchest craft, as propelling power, then take on board, surreptitiously, of course, blankets, food, arms, ammunition, etc., and when all is in readiness, under pretence of a trial trip, cast off, standing out to sea until such time as we may be overhauled by some homeward bound craft, when we will transfer to her deck airship, luggage and all. What says your majesty to the scheme?"

"Capital, my boy, capital. Indeed, nothing could be better. But what a head you have!" as rising, the overjoyed sailor grasps the hand of his friend, vowing "the like never was heard."

The foregoing scheme laid before the authorities was, with little ado accepted in good faith, while as to myself I was released on bail, the Captain going on my bonds (straw, of course), until at the expiration of forty and five days a thoroughly well-constructed aerial machine swung at her anchorage, the invention hailed with joy by the on-lookers, who, it is safe to say, little suspected the

use to which it was liable to be put. And now methinks I hear from all sides the pertinent question, "How was it possible, under such adverse conditions to conduct an affair of such magnitude?"

In explanation I have it to say that tributary to and adjacent to the unused storehouse where I had been imprisoned, was an annex, in dimension some six by eight feet, where, from time to time, all sorts of trumpery had been laid away, these largely accumulated from raids on foreign shipping. Thinking something might be found available for present requirements, the supposed useless rubbish was overhauled, resulting in discoveries of the utmost importance just at this time, for here was a chest of old rusty irons, broken chains, badly used bolts, a bundle of files, nearly new; while, looking a little farther was found a huge brass-bound trunk, which on opening, was found to consist of several bales of silks and satins.

"Aha!" cries the Captain, "here's a find of some account, for it's just what we most need for the balloon."

Underneath a huge pile of drygoods boxes was a demijohn labeled "Sulphuric Acid."

Work on the balloon commenced. the silks were cut in proper lengths, seamstresses sewed the long strips together, meanwhile iron filings were prepared, large casks turned into gas-holders, and, when all was in readiness, the balloon was inflated and time set for carrying the experiment to completion, and while all this is being done the boat is decked from the bow back to near the center, ostensibly as a platform from which to work the unique motor, but really as a shield for Hab-a-sha,

who, it is expected, will be a passenger, for to let the poor girl remain on the island would be simply to court death, for the Amazons, finding the Captain and I had left, would rise against her, venting on her head the wrath naturally belonging to us.

The day and hour set for the venture saw a large concourse of eager spectators gathered at the wharf, where lay the craft destined to convey us seaward, but how little this anxious group suspected the innocent source of all their troubles lay quietly ensconced under that platform. Nevertheless, such was the case, for Hab-a-sha had been the night before secretly conveyed to the boat, and was now serenely reposing on blankets specially provided for the auspicious event.

Taking station at the bow, where I could easily direct the movements of the balloon, Captain Light-house about to cast off, when a well-known voice in commanding tones, cries:

“What is this you are about to do? Turn back! I command it. Loose not the boat on pain of instant death!”

It now for the first time dawned on my mind that the Captain’s late subjects were becoming awakened to the fact that all things in this world are not as they seem. In other words, we were about to take final leave, hence it was of vital importance that immediate steps be taken looking to the frustration of our well laid plans, to which end command was given: “Guards to the front!” Then half a score muskets were pointed in our direction, held by as many female warriors, who rapidly advanced, agreeable to order, taking station in line along the beach.

“Captain Lighthouse, and you, renegade Bartholemew, once more we command, Turn back, else thy blood be on thine own head.”

Aha! Here’s another turn of affairs not particularly creditable to a pair of crowned heads, I must confess, nor is there much ground for arbitration—thoughts passing swift review—so taking time by the forelock, I hand to the Captain a sharp-bladed knife, the detaining cable is severed; the balloon, catching the wind, “rises to the occasion,” so to speak, and before the eager soldiery could gather together their wits sufficiently to secure accurate aim we were out of range.

Swinging my cap high in the air in parting salutation, I at the same time raise my voice, joyously shouting: “Ye blamed idiots, fire and be hanged to you!” Yet before the words had fairly escaped my lips a volley rang out in defiance, the balls flying short of the mark. So away we sped till mid-afternoon, when it was estimated not less than a hundred miles had been made. Meantime my fair companion, released from her confined quarters, was overjoyed at having so easily evaded her enemies, the thought intensified by the reflection that from this time on she was to be under my sole protection; hence, as a matter of necessity, as was my future, so would be hers, and she could hardly find adequate words to express her gratification at the eventful turn of affairs. There was but little time for indulgence in sentiment, however, the craft, under pressure of aerial sail, bounding lightly over the billows, yet requiring my utmost care and attention.

Well along toward sunset, with every prospect

of remaining aboard the little craft through the long night, I was somewhat apprehensive that trouble might yet be in store, but one thing in our favor, the wind was perceptibly lessening. Yet, as an offset, the sun was sinking behind a bank of ominous appearing clouds, "as," said the Captain, "portending a storm," thereby giving rise to some uneasiness, for should a tempest arise and we be obliged to cut loose from our "aerial steed" our case would be well-nigh hopeless.

Thus indulging in serious forebodings, the chief's daughter coming in for the largest share of my thoughts, I was suddenly startled and immeasurably gratified upon hearing in exalted tones the Captain's voice—"Sail ho!"

"Where away?" in true sailor fashion I reply.

"Directly at our front, heading this way," the Captain answers.

Turning in the direction indicated I was overjoyed on beholding a large ship under full press of canvas coming directly toward us. Without the least hesitancy I throw wide open the balloon valve, thus allowing free escape of gas, and await the outcome.

'Twas not long in coming. The great ship "heaving to," a boat is lowered, and before we hardly have time to think where we are we find ourselves on the deck of the strange vessel surrounded by an eager, enthusiastic throng of sailors, who, on enquiry, furnish us the gratifying, though remarkable piece of news, perhaps some might say coincidence, that this was a British frigate on return from an expedition where some two years previous one Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, in command of

the "Andromeda," had been dispatched. "But," added the frigate's commander, "the poor man, along with one of the finest ships of the British navy, has never been heard from since."

Little did the commander of the "Bombastes"—the vessel appearing at this time in interest of that same Jeremy Lighthouse and one Josiah Bartholemew, late accredited chief of a female community—realize that he had these same noted personages as guests on board his own ship, and we were careful not to enlighten him on the subject; none the less thankful, however, that he had been the means of preserving us from a fate sure to have been ours had not he or some other good Samaritan appeared in our behalf. Suffice it to say, that ninety and five days thereafter saw the British man-of-war swinging at anchor in the Thames, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse, in the rôle of honored guest, installed at the home of an old friend, the daughter of the late chief Tanawarga in comfortable quarters at a low-priced, though eminently respectable hotel, while I, Josiah Bartholemew, engaged in making report of the long succession of adventures, culminating as herewith stated.

Upon finishing my report to the "London Times" authorities, who, it is safe to say, were literally dumfounded, vowing 'twas the most marvellous tale they had ever before listened to, Mr. Waltars, the principal proprietor of that world-wide known sheet, hinting that "it was but a stepping stone to my future greatness: though," he adds, "I don't see how it's possible for one to be greater than when lording it over a thousand female sub-

jects," a sentiment in which I privately begged to differ with him, but I said nothing.

My first step was to hunt up one "Joe Lindley, Lawyer," inasmuch as I desired to consult that worthy gentleman on the advisability of publishing Colonel Ashburton's manuscript in connection with the adventures wherein I played so conspicuous a part. However, before taking this step I thought as a matter of prudence 'twould be well to take a look at the ancient remains stored in a certain warehouse some blocks distant from my present quarters. So, starting out on the praiseworthy expedition, we had barely gotten under way when there came to our startled ears the clangor of fire bells announcing a conflagration. But where?

"The great warehouse near the London Company's docks."

The identical building where repose the remains of the "First Born"!

Alas! I find the startling and fatal report verified, for upon reaching the spot the great building is one mass of seething flames. Thus, our last hope fled, nothing remaining to give color to my story save the oft quoted, long cherished manuscript, to which, according to promise, I have faithfully, persistently clung, my varying fortunes in no whit lessening my regard for its more than sacred pages, and which, as before said, was destined some time to set the world "all agog." And now in conclusion of this part of my story I will briefly say that publication begun, the two expeditions in one volume will soon be in the hands of a generous public.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER XLV.

AFTER THREE YEARS.

THREE years have glided swiftly by, and save for the published manuscript, as promised, and as previously announced, had set the world "all agog," the remarkable incidents therein recorded—now little more than a memory—nothing has been heard concerning it only that expeditions having a like object in view have from time to time been set on foot, the originators laboring under the impression that farther and more extended search might possibly reveal the names of no less importance than those that went down on the "Andromeda" that ill-fated morning, along with their exhumers, Colonel Henry Ashburton, of whom I alone of the whole ship's company was saved.

During the past three years my labors had not only been manifold, but unusually severe, from the fact that along with the ordinary duties pertaining to a correspondent and reporter of a great London daily, I had been sent to America to report doings on the several battlefields, thus keeping my paper *en rapport* with the reading public

relative to the internecine strife then being waged in that far-off republic. Thus remaining for a year or more sometimes in camp, at others on the field of battle, I was an interested spectator to a number of engagements, many of a sanguinary character. Up to this time no one was wise enough to foretell the outcome, for both sides were equally sanguine of success, but from what I could gather, both from observation and hearsay, the South must inevitably succumb.

I was fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to be a writer of the battle of Gettysburg, and I would here add that a full account of this battle was published in the "London Times," through no act of my own, however, for seeking an injudicious position in the rear of Pickett's charging column, I was suddenly—and as is usual in such cases—without warning stricken down by a chance shot. Thus I lay, unconscious to all earthly, and I might add, heavenly things, until finally my mentality came to me under conditions that may perchance tax the credulity of my readers, fully as much as my own, for I can assure all who read this story that I am as much in the dark as they possibly can be.

CHAPTER XLVI.

I NEARLY LOSE MY SENSES.

“WHO, what and where am I?” Thoughts uppermost in my mind when regaining consciousness from the long night of sleep, the last remembrance of which occurred on the bloody field where I was stricken down by a Union bullet, though, of course, unintentional. Surely this is not where I fell? for there I was surrounded by armed hosts, all around dead, dying and wounded heroes, the former pressing on to victory or death, the air burdened with the roar of artillery, eager shouts of combatants filling the gaps between shots, while here all is peace, quiet, apparently contentment.

Verily I am in a quandary. But who is that strange appearing person at yonder table? His eyes rest on me, while his face has a familiar look; his garb is of an elegance I’ve never seen equalled. Then, too, his surroundings! Surely some fairy must have waved her wand lovingly over his head to have produced this scene of enchantment—this apartment one hundred and fifty feet in length, if I am any judge of distances, the walls of stucco forty or more feet in height, fairly glittering with gems, floors of the purest white marble inlaid with gold, windows, three on either side, of a single

plate fifteen feet wide by thirty in length, while from the lofty ceiling depend chandeliers twelve in number of richly chased gold, each of a different pattern and beautiful beyond anything my fancy has ever pictured. The couch whereon I recline is made of the choicest of woods brilliantly polished, upholstered with rich damask: the coverings over me of spun wool.

A little time spent in scanning the various objects wherewith I am surrounded, I again, not only in thought, but uplifted voice, repeat the expression originally propounded, viz.: "Who, what and where am I?"

Upon this stirring appeal the occupant of the chair rises, and keeps on rising, until to my unbounded astonishment he attains the enormous stature of quite fifteen feet. Whereupon I again lift up my voice in supplication, rather than as before, in entreaty: "Good friend, if it so please thee, sit down, for I am truly overwhelmed in contemplation of thy wondrous height."

"Josiah Bartholemew," said the voice emanating from the capacious chest of the strange being, "look to thyself, then, if thou canst, estimate the difference between thy stature and mine."

It now began to dawn on my mind that somehow I had changed, though just how it was impossible to tell, but taking a downward glance I found my nether extremities were taking on inordinate proportions, so, instead of repeating the question in full, I cut it short by the pertinent enquiry: "Who am I?"

"Before answering I will ask another, to wit: Dost know who I am?"

260 THE OLD MOUNTAIN HERMIT.

• This from the stranger.

Instead of replying I study his features, hearken to his voice, take note of his countenance. Ha! my eyes are opened, on the instant a thought strikes me. Aye, both strikes and startles me, for in this strange, unearthly being, I discern none other than the "Old Hermit of the Mountain." "God be praised!" was at my tongue's end, for I had begun to fear all that I saw and heard was simply the vagaries of dreamland, else the offshoot of a diseased imagination, also that it might be possible that I would once more find myself victim of the Gettysburg battlefield.

Said I, leaving out the question first propounded and from which I have received no satisfactory answer, "Would it not be more to the purpose to proceed at once to the city of London, thence to the Times office, and make report, for I am sure Mr. Waltars will be anxiously awaiting news of the last great battle, that is to say, up to the time I fell while cheering on the troops in that last grand charge of General Pickett."

Still questioning, I ask about how long it's been since I was picked up and borne from the field, for I am positive it must have been quite a little time since, inasmuch as I feel no soreness from the wound.

Upon hearing this startling news my Hermit friend gave vent to a series of audible chuckles, then in soberness said: "Aye, how long, indeed? Why, Josiah Bartholemew, you would have me to understand that your Mr. Waltars is anxiously awaiting your return to give report of the battle of Gettysburg, but know this, so long has Mr.

Waltars lain in his grave that were you to unearth his remains, if so fortunate as to find the locality, not a shred of bone, tissue or muscle would you find. 'From the dust thou art, and to the dust thou shalt return' is a truthful message never more conspicuously displayed than in the case of Mr. Waltars—fulfilled only after the lapse of centuries, maybe, therefore in some small measure will you be able to gauge the lapse of time, since the well-known man and editor was carried to his last earthly resting place."

"How about the 'Times'?" I still question. "Maybe there are others connected with that world-wide journal who would be pleased to have report?"

"Obtuse man, canst not yet comprehend my sayings? Canst not yet realize that ages have rolled over the head of the late editor-in-chief, the fate of his journal and worthy assistants alike shared; but to no longer keep thee in suspense I will make clean breast of the whole affair."

A few moments' reflection and the Old Hermit again speaks: "At the time farewells were spoken at the mountain cavern you will doubtless remember, Josiah, that I said: 'Josiah, you will never set eyes on me again, unless my services are required to extricate thee from peril, in which event I will come to thee.'

"I followed thee, indeed was with thee through all thy journeyings, even to the battlefield where thou wert stricken with the fatal bullet, when I took charge of, and had you conveyed to this great central planet, where you have remained unconscious until this morning, but thinking the hour

propitious for bringing you back to life, I have taken that important step—the lengthy period of five centuries intervening—whence it hath been a matter of speculation as to how your Mr. Waltars has regarded your conduct in leaving your post of duty without permission from that noted gentleman, so, taking it all in all, you have thought to question the advisability of immediately reporting to the Times office, thus setting matters to rights, and by the same chain of reasoning, you would enquire about the great capital city of London, at that epoch in the world's history the most important and populous city on the face of the globe.

“Know, then, that in so far as regards the former, I have already told you; and as to the latter, I have to inform you that the onceswhile world's emporium is naught but a desert waste, given over to the Owl that flieth at night time, and the Fox that diggeth his hole by day.

“‘How did all this come about?’ you ask? Well, in this way: A half century subsequent to the great rebellion in America, the outlying province of Canada, it seems, had made secret overtures looking to annexation to the reconstructed States—never so prosperous as at this particular time. Meantime the mother country, getting wind of the affair and wishing to put a stop to the unlawful proceedings, dispatched an immense fleet, thus throwing down the gauge of battle in order to compel that nation to desist attempt to secure possessions to which they had no right, legal or otherwise, the mother country taking the ground that a child cannot legally give itself away without consent of the parent; so, in

order to cope successfully with her powerful antagonist, Great Britain was compelled to call home a large part of her East India troops, both land and naval forces. Crossing the seas a considerable portion of the fleet rendezvoused at a convenient point of the disputed territory, landing several thousand soldiers, the major portion proceeding to cities lying on or near the coast.

“Due preparations were made, and these cities were bombarded, particularly that commercial emporium at the confluence of the East and North rivers, resulting in that great city being razed to the ground, hardly one stone left on another.

“At this critical period in her history, fearing the fray would ultimately terminate in favor of her opponent, the American Government called on her powerful ally, Russia, in conjunction with that no less powerful France, and as both had grievances to adjust, they gladly lent aid, so that Great Britain was finally crushed, her immense fleets, together with the largest army ever before congregated under one head, compelled to surrender to a foe she had journeyed so great a distance to attack. Meanwhile the socialist element—that is to say, the laboring classes, who on supposition they also had grievances to redress and believing the time had come to put forth their claims, banded together, rising up in a night, and, as all the forces England could readily muster were already in the field, little difficulty was experienced in carrying out their well laid plans.

“So we find, as a culmination of their efforts, the great city of London—with its half score million people—sacked, its stout walls hurled to the ground,

until it was truthfully said, 'There was not one stone left upon another.'

"Inasmuch as success attended their efforts in the first bout, they tried a second, resulting in the whole of Great Britain being overrun, her fields laid waste, her royal palaces destroyed, and whatsoever bore the least taint of aristocracy.

"The war at an end, affairs amicably adjusted, the naval fleets, together with transports, loaded with the beaten soldiery, set out on their return home, little suspecting their absence had resulted so disastrously to the great English nation—because communication, for political purposes, had in the interim been wholly cut off—this made little difference, however, for no more than one-half the distance overcome, when a furious storm arose, the tempest raging with the utmost intensity, until at length, fleets, transports, warriors and all that constitutes a grand army, were overwhelmed, and swept to oblivion.

"From the success attending their efforts, the people everywhere united, overrunning the various countries. Thus kingdoms, monarchies and principalities came to a speedy end, while the so-called 'aristocracy' was swept as with the besom of destruction from off the face of the earth.

"A period of unexampled prosperity now set in—but whether of progress was to be determined later on. Republican forms of government were now the rule, thus the people on a level, and so it was proposed they should remain. In the instance of North America, the area, through annexation nearly or quite doubled, the several peoples comprised within that immense territory seemed about

to enter on an era of prosperity, thereby placing them at the head of all the nations of the world.

“The mutations of time, century after century of improvement in all directions, keeping even pace, until at length the vast domain becomes the pivotal center around which revolves the interests of the entire globe, the emporium, heretofore spoken of as lying at the confluence of the East and North rivers, has now become a world’s capital, with a population estimated at not less than twenty and five millions, within whose territory is comprised more than one thousand square miles, reaching to the north, the headwaters of the North river, the shores lined with palatial residences, the architecture of an excellence unknown to the more ancient days, that is to say, along toward the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—while many towns and cities are more densely populated than was the city of which I speak, at that time.

“Another, second only in importance, was a city founded in the nineteenth century, situated at the head of an important chain of lakes, formerly known ‘as the city of Chicago,’ now ‘the great western metropolis,’ with a population numbering in the aggregate more than fifteen million souls.

“The third city in importance, founded at a still later date, located at what was once known as ‘St. Anthony Falls,’ at that time the head of navigation on the largest river of the continent, the Mississippi, and destined at no distant day to overshadow all others, because of its immense agricultural, commercial and other resources. Bartholemew, I will not conceal from you the fact that on a late visit to that part of the globe I was most favorably

impressed, indeed, I think I have never known a city of such unlimited resources, nor one of more magnificent possibilities, for here is one of the youngest cities on the continent, within whose extreme limits are embraced more than a thousand leagues.

"But, Josiah, if there have been such radical changes in business affairs, what shall we say of those pertaining to governmental functions? To wit, when you were a sojourner on earth's domain, the President of the United States was chosen, from, and by the people, regardless of caste, wealth or social prestige, hence, we find that exalted personage down to the most insignificant incumbents of office, drew together such a vast horde of office seekers in connection with those desirous of political preferment that the common people were so overburdened with taxation as to make it a difficult matter to make both ends meet, and this we find the case whether the government be monarchical, democratic or republican, but thanks to the law of progression; the nations of the earth, one generation after another, have in good measure cast off these barnacles heretofore clinging to the ship of state—for 'statehood' is but another name for unwarranted, or rather, unnecessary expenditures of the public moneys."

"But how," I unceremoniously break in, "is it possible to carry on a government where there are so many diverse interests, and such an immense territory, on supposition, the states are all thrown into one?"

"The simplest thing imaginable, Josiah, for now the people are the government in reality, as they

were once in theory, only, therefore, a yearly convention is held at some central point—presumably Triniapolis—which, since the annexation of the Canadas, has become the geographical center of the continent—the convention composed of delegates chosen directly from and of the people.”

“Yes, but,” I again interrupt, “what can be gained by this singular departure from ancient traditions?”

“Much, because under this form of government fewer laws are needed, so in like manner are there a less number to be enforced, farthermore, a law once entered on the statute books must forever there remain, unless some good reason why it should be expunged. Whereas, under the old system, it was a common thing for a law to be enacted one session, only to be repealed the next, but this is now all done away with, so there is no need for state legislatures, and much else useless governmental machinery.”

“But why,” I again ask, “is there less requirement for the enactment of laws than before?”

“Because the masses educated up to a higher standard, generation after generation, of enlightenment, leading up to a knowledge of ‘good and evil,’ holding fast to the one, and eschewing the other, hence it is seldom crimes of special magnitude are known, so, you see, if one generation arrives to a higher state of perfection than the one preceding, logically the succeeding one would come up to a still higher standard, until, in the end, to do a wrong would be so obnoxious to the well regulated mind as to tempt one to go hang himself rather than to face such an accusation.

“It will thus be readily seen that the so-called

'learned professions' have received, through adoption of the aforesaid measures, a shock from which it will be many a long day before they recover. The lesser lights, sheriffs, constables, detectives, jurors—barnacles sapping the very life blood of any nation or people—are left to shift for themselves, so, instead of destroying, are building up. In fact, a sweeping change has been effected through the body politic, so that now everybody may be considered happy.

"So, too, in the higher branches of office, members of Congress, Supreme and district court judges, down to the justice of the peace—whose functions are mainly settling disputes—still, on supposition, there are none to settle, no Smith versus Jones, to disfigure the book of record. I gladly hold up both hands in one long, lingering shout, 'Amen!'

"Again take the practice—rather, malpractice—of medicine, and herewith I hold it a self-evident truth, that in the absence of a large part of the doctors, there would be so little need of their services, the world, coming to its senses, would be in a state of wonderment as to why this particular class of barnacles should have been so long tolerated, and of whom the world is well rid. Why? you ask. Because the laws of health are better known, people do not gorge their stomachs simply for the gratification of the palate, nor indulge in the use of intoxicating liquors for the sake of destroying the intellect, because urged upon them by disinterested parties.

"Josiah, I now come to the last of the learned professions, the clergy; yet, were the several sys-

tems of theology, as taught, put in practice—there might be some excuse for the preacher.”

Upon this avowal from one I had ever considered a staunch friend, and to whom I was still inclined to look upon as such—but, from this wholesale denunciation of a class I had at all times considered, of all earth’s benefactors, the most useful, they, who from my youth up, I had been taught to reverence, I rose up in my wrath, accusing the Old Hermit of being a rank impostor, saying that I could now comprehend why I had been so long a creature of circumstances, and so cruelly imposed upon.

In his customary, gentle manner, he immediately returned: “Resume your seat, my friend, yet understand, I make no heedless nor unwise assertion, nay, nor unprovable statement. On the contrary, I simply proclaim the truth, when saying the so-called clergy are simply barnacles, teaching things they know not of, and so at this, the twenty-fifth century A. D., the world has reached a point where it is considered unnecessary to the religious, rather preferring to give employment to secular teachers.

“Do I deny a future? Nay. Else could you have come hither? For if, when stricken down on the field of Gettysburg, five long centuries since, there were no future, you would long ago have ‘slept the long sleep that knows no waking,’ instead of putting on immortality, and advanced to this central sphere, the culmination of spirit existence. Do I believe in a future? Aye, indeed, a future so glorious, so far removed from the highways of bigotry, accepted by those who expect to

wing their way upborne by priestly chariot, to celestial realms, but whereto they comprehend not, preferring unfounded, wholly unproved statements rather than take the trouble to search for themselves a light that illumines with noon-tide radiance, thus lost to a happiness all have it in their power to acquire.

“Enlightenment, the watchword of the present, aided by its handmaid, progress is fast sifting the wheat from the chaff, and earth’s dwellers hastening toward a belief that lifts them above the narrow range of mortal affairs, meantime presents to their gaze an immortality that never fades nor grows dim, approached not through churchly dogmas and worn-out creeds, for all these, having had their day, are relegated to oblivion, and so a new and brighter era has been inaugurated. Thus knowledge derived from a being, capable of creating, and willing to maintain powers having origin from this dominating central orb, thence transmitted to other spheres, there to be put in force by their respective rulers, and here is where earth’s dwellers have made a serious mistake, in conceiving this diminutive sphere to be the dominating orbit, and to which all others are subservient.

“Josiah Bartholemew, it will henceforth be thy mission to undeceive those in error, and ’tis for this thou wert transferred hither. I the one detailed for that special purpose, thou the only one of earth’s mortals as yet permitted to look upon and tread these Elysian shores.

“I will now speak more at length about earth’s doings, afterward of those pertaining to thy future, to wit: During the past five centuries the people

of the western hemisphere becoming united, may be considered of one race, who, inaugurating, are capable of maintaining a more lofty standard relative to every relation in life, and as under the ancient régime, there was but little system, one class warring against another, the weaker succumbing to the stronger, hence, there was one continual scene of turmoil and strife, the world the whole time growing worse rather than better, one after another putting himself at the head of a faction, proclaiming himself a veritable Moses, liberating the overtaxed slave from the heavy hand of the master, in the end only to fall back to the rear of the column, faint-hearted and broken.

“At this juncture the masses of the people having arrived at an understanding as to the requirements of nature’s laws, as originally promulgated, rose up as one man. Binding themselves together in self-interest, they cast down altars built to supplant the many in interest of the few. The first onset proving an unqualified success, they attack and utterly destroy the government buildings. The officials in charge scattered like leaves before the gale. So, they who by successive generations filled their coffers with gold wrung from the brows of those who sweat in behalf of the laboring classes, eventually compelled to disgorge their ill gotten plunder, the accumulated wealth distributed pro rata, the title to landed estates guaranteed by those who had no real equity in the premises.

“Thus the source of evils dried up, crime came to a standstill, churches, where once the people gathered to worship the one God, were now school

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houses. The teachers, imbued with due sense of the responsibilities attendant on their high vocation, were thus paramount for good, and so all things adjusted to the universal satisfaction."

CHAPTER XLVII.

BREAKFAST.

JUBAL now takes his departure, and I am left alone. Alone? Nay, for it is but a few minutes when I am greeted by sounds both pleasing and gratifying, for echoing through corridors of the great building, is heard the clangor of bells, followed by entrance of a retinue of servants headed by a remarkable personage, clad in robes of satin trimmed with purple velvet, altogether a generous outfit for one in the position I take it he fills, viz., butler, or head waiter, who advances and orders his assistants to deposit on the table what appears to be my breakfast, and as my fast has extended over a period of five long centuries, I am naturally rejoiced that I am again to have something to eat. Taking station round a mahogany table, the signal is given, when several trays are arranged in symmetrical order, each containing several sorts of fish, flesh and fowl, likewise fruits, both luscious and rare.

A second signal, and the tray bearers depart the way they came, and I to all appearance to be waited on by the aforesaid remarkable personage of flowing beard, and a bearing a king might envy, while the table service was of a magnificence rarely equalled, plates of the purest china, napkins of the

finest linen, fringed with lace, urns and the service of silver chased in allegorical emblems, peculiar, as I judged, to paradisaical regions. One peculiarity in striking contrast to those in servitude, was lack of speech, for from the instant of being awakened to the present, not a word had been spoken, save by my ghostly interlocutor, so I came to the conclusion I was being waited upon by mutes, though, as I judged, by no means deaf.

In this, however, I was soon to be undeceived, for on the retiring of the servants, whom I heard talking without, the butler belabored my ears with a language I could no more understand than so much Eskimo, that I was on the point of crying "Quits," meantime, indulging the fear that, after all, my hunger was to go unappeased, notwithstanding the elaborate feast provided for my especial benefit; yet, what astonished me more than all else lay in the fact that in the butler's case words now were spoken in good, honest Anglo-Saxon—my mother tongue—whence I was led to the conviction, as I had often heard said, 'The sun never sets on British possessions,' and certainly there could be no better exemplification of that fact than was now presented.

Breakfast finished, with a wave of the hand, Jubal dismissed the servants. Evidently, having some weighty subject on his mind, I urged Jubal to disclose whatsoever might be troubling him.

"Josiah!" he answers, "actual war is impending. I find an outlying province, some twenty-five thousand miles distant, has from some cause or other become dissatisfied with the present state of affairs, so have sent word to the general government, that,

unless things are more to their liking, war will be resorted to. Of course, a menace of this kind cannot be overlooked nor condoned, hence the preparations by the government for actual war."

"But what has the province you name to find fault with?" I questioned.

"Nothing more, nor less, than the right of self-government, a demand similar to one made by another faction some five hundred years ago, and in which you had the honor of taking part, thereby sacrificing your earthly life," replies Jubal.

"So the government is taking measures to suppress the rebellion?" I answer.

"Yes, but whether they succeed is another question; but we shall see." Then continuing, Jubal goes on to say, "As a good many days must necessarily be consumed in preparing for the desperate undertaking, for you must know, Josiah, the enemy are almost, if not quite as powerful in both numbers and resources, the contest must, from the very nature of things, be something out of the common run. Therefore, I suggest we take a journey, say fifty thousand miles inland, for the purpose of taking a survey of this vast extent of territory, noting its varied industries, likewise immense resources."

"Nothing you could suggest would please me better," I return. So it was settled and agreement entered into, that we set out on the following morning, to which end passage was engaged on board the fast sailing airship "Argonaut," which, according to the table, would set sail at the usual time of 8.30 A. M. An estimate, supposing the regular time made, *i.e.*, ten thousand miles per

day, the round trip would consume some ten days, providing there were no long stops made. So it was proposed, outward bound, through tickets be purchased, halting at only two or three of the larger towns, and should sufficient time be at command, before sailing of the government fleet, which, in rôle of war correspondent, I was expected to accompany, we could on our return stop at as many stations as we chose.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE JOURNEY.

TEN o'clock of the following morning found my faithful friend, along with one Josiah Bartholemew, on board the great airship "Tarrantalus," in readiness for a journey, computed at ten thousand miles, and now, were I to give faithful description of the aerial monster, it would be to say, that it was all of one hundred and fifty feet in height, by forty in breadth; around the outer edge ran a low rail, while at regular intervals secured to the platform were some fifty upholstered seats, already occupied, save the two previously reserved for Jubal and myself.

Swinging high overhead, attached to the platform by stout cables, was the airship proper, said to be perfectly safe under all conditions, though it looked too ethereal to suit my fancy, but then I recollected that in spirit life things are somewhat different than when in the natural body.

The passengers, of all ages and either sex, were mostly clad in gorgeous raiment, and still more to my liking, were in excessively good humor, and withal, gentle mood, for this mode of travel was to them an everyday occurrence, therefore no uneasiness felt in regard to its safety.

And now the great station bell peals forth the

hour of starting, the cables are loosed and the aerial ship majestically rises, for an instant halts as if to enquire the way, then, accompanied by cheers and shouts of a great multitude of spectators, who never seemed to tire of the novelty, proceeds on its way. But just how the ship was propelled, was, to a stranger like myself, a wondrous mystery, especially in the absence of the least perceptible current of air. The mystery, however, soon set at rest, for casting my eyes, as one might say, seaward, I was nearly bereft of my senses—on supposition I had any to lose—after all the marvellously astonishing things I had seen. I say, in view of all this, I saw attached to the bow of the aeronautic machine a company of flying forms, numbering two score, twenty on either side.

“What! in the name of all the saints—and devils,” I was on the point of saying, and who should blame me—but rather I changed the expression to one of simple wonder, then rubbed my eyes and looked again, with this result, that these flying figures, with wide extending wings and hoarse cries, bore us onward with the speed of the wind.

“Aeronautic motor,” Jubal quietly replies to my look of astonishment.

“And most singular motor it is,” I return, and why not? For here were forty winged creatures, not so very unlike to the great condor of the Alps, only many times larger; indeed, I judged them to exceed two hundred pounds each in weight, while as to the wings, well, to say the least, they were not one whit less than forty feet from tip to tip; so, with graceful and seemingly unconstrained movement, they beat the

air, hauling the immense car with astonishing rapidity, the reins in hand of a driver seated on a little platform some three feet above the deck.

A half hour of this swift movement and the walls of a city appear in the distance, and before I had time to make enquiry, Jubal, anticipating me, said, "Yonder town is called Acropolis, a city of twenty-five millions of people, its industries mainly manufacturing," a fact I could readily understand, for from the chimney stacks of a thousand buildings rose vast clouds of smoke and flame, suggestive, as I remarked, "Of the infernal regions."

"On supposition there were such," Jubal returns, though he continues, "As a matter of fact there are none, except in the imagination."

A few moments later and we were hanging over the great city. At signal, the airship drops gently to the ground, a considerable gathering of spirit people awaiting our arrival, for the purpose of going aboard, others leaving, having reached the end of the journey, and just here let me say that my fate was to a large extent foreshadowed by this stopping, for had no one come on board I would not have met a fate from which I have never complained, nor sought to be extricated, being perfectly content indeed. Love at first sight was never more truthfully exemplified than on this occasion, nor was matrimonial venture more successful. A peculiarly significant fact lay in this: Wheresoever I was inclined to go, or my steps chanced to lead, every eye followed my movements, for it seemed that I was regarded as an inhabitant of another world, and respected accordingly. But in no instance was that regard so manifest as in the case

of a maiden who came on board at the last station.

It is not my intention to portray the many accomplishments of one who was destined to engross my every thought and attention, for, despite my utmost efforts I could not do her justice. Hence, will only go so far in avowals of praise as to acknowledge that in all my previous experiences it had never been my lot to meet one in whom the combined graces were so fully displayed. But then, it is a well known fact that love is blind to all outside influences.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MY FATE SEALED.

"JUBAL, knowest thou yon maiden—she of the flaxen hair, rosy cheeks and a bearing a queen might envy? Knowest thou her, Jubal?" I repeat.

"Aye! that I do," he returns. "She is the daughter of an eminent astrologer, who lives not far from the center of the town, and to whom I am no stranger. Moreover, when it pleaseth me to sojourn hereabout, I am a welcome guest, the astrologer a generous host, a highly esteemed citizen—indeed, he ranks second to none of the municipality—and altogether a prosperous man. But, Josiah, what is it to thee? Methinks thou art uncommonly interested in one with whom you have no acquaintance; but, never mind, I will at the first opportunity give you an introduction."

"Thanks, worthy Jubal, I will hold myself in readiness to accept the kindly offer," I respond.

Our brief stay finished, signal given, and the ponderous machine again rises to the occasion, so to speak, the winged steeds buckle to with a will, sailing to the happy songs and mirthful greetings of the enthusiastic travelers.

As the voyage continues, new beauties spring up on every hand, wide extended plain and lofty mountain range—their summits seeming to graze the skies—outlined on the horizon, thus conveying the

idea there are other paradisaical worlds no less easy of access than those of which we already have knowledge. Forests, too, of illimitable extent.

The monarch, hoary with age, yet evidencing nothing of time's ravages. While lakes of every form and size, as surveyed from the great height attained, reflect back their mirror-like surface, thus causing a thrill of transport to surge through every fibre of our being.

And now another city rises to view, but no stop is here made, although Jubal announces its name as that of Athalone, or queen city.

As our brave steeds wing their way overhead, other aeronautic ships are observed putting off, some making ready for departure. The waiting assemblage giving us royal greeting, our flight followed by applause. "Something out of the common run," suggests Jubal, "only to be accounted for on supposition that your fame, Josiah, has traveled faster and farther than thou. Yea," he continues, with unbounded enthusiasm, "as, borne on wings of the wind, to say nothing of the wings of our noble steeds, the startling news has gone forth, 'that a stranger from a distant planet has arrived.'" Anon, wide rivers are crossed, their swift current stemmed by vessels of merchandise sailing to some foreign port, stretches of prairie, brought to the highest state of cultivation, wearing the look of one vast garden, while away over yonder, creeping at tortoise-like pace, yet moving at the schedule rate of two hundred miles per hour, are to be seen railway carriages, the long sinuous trains no inapt reminder of our common ancestors' tempter, "The Serpent!" Thus we journey for the

space of some ten hours, the shades of departing day warning us of the swift approach of night, whereon we again drop to earth, descending at the city Magenthum, where we are to remain for the night. So, after quite a search, quarters are secured at the celebrated Hotel Elegante.

Shortly before reaching the celebrated hotel, Jubal, according to promise, gave me introduction to my fair friend, when soon after, supper was announced, and I had the exalted honor of escorting her to the table, and giving her a seat at my side.

If, in the lovely Genevra, I had previously discerned more than ordinary beauties of person, what shall I say concerning those of the mind, and above all, excellences of heart, the one gratifying to the senses, the other spiritual in my enthusiasm, I looked on the fair one as the very height of perfection.

Supper over, I proposed a stroll about town, forasmuch as the magnificent city was one glare of light from center to circumference, in point of fact the noonday sun could hardly excel it in brilliancy, so it will be readily seen the most minute objects were brought to view.

As we wandered hither and thither about the wonderful town, many strange sights were witnessed. Indeed, I could not recall a single incident coming under my observation at the renowned British capital, "The City of London," for here were open squares on either of the four sides, blocks of uniform height and style, devoted to staple articles of commerce, manufactured from the choicest materials, for everybody seemed attired in silks and satins. Again, a broad avenue of stately

palaces—for there were few others to be seen, for where all are on equal footing, all share and share alike, and then, too, the enormous stature of the citizens—though as to this I had become so accustomed I hardly gave it a second thought. But I have no disposition to weary anyone with an extended description of the many strange scenes encountered during my brief stay at the city of Magenthum, and will only farther say that of them all, none gave me a sense of supreme satisfaction as did the lovely maiden at my side, for she was not only a pleasing companion, but one capable of furnishing much useful information, because she was possessed of a more than ordinarily cultivated intellect, which, added to her native powers, along with knowledge of governmental functions, really, I was pretty near going overboard in my wondrous affection.

Eight o'clock in the morning saw us on our way to the aeronautic station, where, on arrival, I found Jubal in a state of fearful unrest, manifested by pacing the platform with hasty strides—something unusual for one of his staid character—so, on questioning, I found he was fearful something would happen whereby we would be delayed on our journey, in which event the fleet might sail without us.

Resuming our customary seats, the airship majestically rises, the winged steeds, refreshed, apply their best energies to a task that to the uninitiated must seem wearisome indeed, moving away to the strains of a band of music furnished by the authorities—as Jubal asserts—“in honor of the stranger guest.”

CHAPTER L.

THE END OF THE JOURNEY.

FIFTY thousand miles continuous travel, save halting at night time, and the end of the long journey is reached, our destination a town second in importance only to the "Great Central City," from whence we started only a short time before. This imperial city is located on the shore of a sea that washes a large portion of the immense kingdom, wherein are located the towns heretofore mentioned.

Here we remain for the space of four and twenty hours, employing the greater part of the time in visiting the principal objects of interest—though, from the vast area, but a tithe of these objects could we survey.

An especially noticeable feature, also one in which I was more than ordinarily interested, was the immensity of shipping congregated along the wharves and about the harbor, for here were one hundred ships of the line, twice that number of transports, all in active preparation for the war now on, waged in opposition to the insurgents—reported nearly, or quite equal in strength to the government forces—whence, it was my firm conviction, that to be in the thick of a fray of this magnitude was to expose oneself to appalling dan-

gers. Notwithstanding the danger, to be in employ of a government of such immense proportions was certainly an honor accorded to few, thus, while the venture could not be otherwise than hazardous, the outcome would be equivalent to having one's name recorded in unmistakable characters, high up on the roll of the most renowned citizens of this, the most remarkable of all commonwealths, because it was a spirit people, dwelling in the spirit world.

After a brief sojourn, we visit the great railway station, from whence depart trains leading direct to the Capitol City; hence it would consume, say at the rate of four thousand, eight hundred miles per day, precisely ten and one-half days to make the run between the two cities.

On reaching the station we found a train just arrived with dispatches from headquarters announcing the fact that the government fleets were nearly in readiness, and would sail at an early date. Consequently, our return must not for an instant be delayed, if we wished to be of the number sailing, and also inducements of a high order would be necessitated in order to induce us to forego the prospective engagement. I suggested to Jubal the desirability of returning by rail, and even then I feared the fleet would have sailed. And as to this plan no objection was offered, especially when it was understood the aeronautic ship would be detained some time for repairs. I ordered a barouche driven in furious haste to Hotel Elegante, and take on board Genevra, returning just as soon as possible, so it was but a little time when she reached the station, wondering what had happened to create such a disturbance. However, giving her

to understand 'twas nothing serious, we went aboard the train and were whirled in space at the astonishing rate of two hundred miles per hour a part of the time, an additional fifty, in deference to my wish that we be not too late for sailing with the fleet.

Nevertheless, had we been detained beyond the schedule rate a single hour, the fleet would have been under way, and I left to chew my finger nails in furious rage. As it was, however, the dock was reached just in the nick of time to go aboard the flag ship "Thunderbolt," in rear of a fleet numbering in the aggregate some five hundred ships of the line. Meantime, the balance of the fleet having weighed anchor, were now to be seen stretching away to the verge of the horizon, immense clouds of canvas spread to the breeze, wafting them to scenes of strife, wounds, bloodshed and death.

CHAPTER LI.

WAR OF THE GIANTS.

“FRIEND Jubal,” said I, “I am afraid the insurgents will stand poor chance, when the immense fleet of government ships casts anchor in their harbors, demanding at the mouth of cannon ‘immediate surrender or take the consequences,’ replied to in the words, ‘Come and take us if you can,’ which will undoubtedly be the case, but when the government batteries open on their works they may change the tune, only too eager to comply with the demands.”

“Ah, Josiah, did you but know the strength of the opposition, you would at once understand that it is war to the death—no child’s play, I can assure you—and I will not deny there are grave doubts in the minds of many that success is by no means certain; yet, be this as it may, the struggle has to come, for such a long continued reign of peace breeds discontent, which can only be healed by the shedding of blood, for a people whether of celestial or terrestrial order, are prone to settle difficulties by arbitrament of arms, so that sooner or later outbreaks of this nature must be expected. However, I am inclined in the belief the ultimate effect will be to settle matters quite

effectively; hence a return to peace will be hailed with joy by all parties, and no very great harm done," saying which, Jubal claiming he had important duties to look after, retired, and I fell to reflecting. Thus I here behold a vast expanse of ocean, from shore to shore fully twenty-five thousand miles, and when this distance is overcome, a thoroughly fortified, skillfully organized, and in every way well equipped foe to be encountered.

Would success follow? Certainly not a foregone conclusion, whereon I was led to question whether it were possible a force in every way equal to that sailing under the national colors, led by competent officers, could cope in opposition to a government founded on equality and justice, whose every act has been the interest of the masses, regardless of rank or social distinction, and as far as I could learn, no complaints had ever come to the heads of departments, no act of injustice urged in excuse, from which, I inferred, the war was set on foot more as a relief to the pentup energies of the masses, in order to give vent to the surplus activities so common among those who are not obliged to work for their daily bread, rather than as redress for fancied grievances.

The flag ship, carrying the commander of the combined naval and land forces, was a vessel of enormous proportions, and if her power was equal to her size, few ships of this or any other fleet could stand against her; not only this, but her armament was something terrific, numbering three hundred guns, each sixty feet in length, carrying shot of five hundred pounds weight, the upper deck devoted to cabin, officers' quarters and the like,

while the seamen had berths below; thus the ship was competent to transporting three thousand men-at-arms, while the sailors numbered about one thousand.

The propelling power of this ship consisted of four screws at the stern, and the same number at the bow, all acting in concert; besides, the vessel was rigged with sails, the masts two hundred feet in height, so the combined forces of screw and sail must necessarily contribute to wondrous speed and terrific power. And as this was self-generating—as heretofore explained—there seemed nothing wanting to make this vessel invulnerable to anything the enemy might be able to send against it.

In addition to the hundreds of ships of the line, there were transports adequate to the conveyance of several hundred thousand marines.

Meganthum, as previously noted, the second city in size and importance to the capital city, likewise the objective point of the late aerial voyage, had raised and dispatched a fleet but little less in size and equipment to the one I was to accompany, while a dozen smaller seaports had contributed each their quota, thereby swelling the national army to nearly four millions of thoroughly equipped and fairly disciplined soldiery, and what a magnificent body of troops! Not one of the whole array less than from twelve to fifteen feet in height, some going up to twenty, all clad in uniforms that the British army in all its glory could not equal. The corps commanders, field marshals, division and brigadier generals, even down to colonels, were accoutred with a magnificence no army on earth below or heaven above could excel, so it will be

readily seen this was no holiday excursion. As all well knew, rather, hard fighting the rule.

Every man expected to do his duty, yet there was not one among the whole number on whose face could be detected a single grain of fear. On the contrary, each and all seemed to be in readiness for the fray. There was, however, a degree of solemnity observable for which I could hardly account, until informed that it was mainly owing to the fact that one section was arrayed against the other, very different from a war with a foreign foe—the first and only time in the history, extending back to the very beginning of time, and that so remote, that figures were not adequate to make calculation, and it did seem a monstrous wrong that after so many centuries of peace the nation should be awakened to a sense of insecurity, and that from its own people.

Lying midway a vast unbroken sea is an immense tract of land laid down on paradisaical charts as “Ordnance Island,” its peculiar name derived from being the principal seaport where are manufactured munitions of war.

Here were immense buildings for the construction of heavy guns, others for gun carriages, caissons, baggage wagons and the various industries inseparable to the carrying on of a nation’s warlike matters, and so we here find a large and important town springing up, supported by those taking part in these government affairs, the population estimated at this particular time at about one million souls.

This thrifty and important town, known as Midway City, was now a scene of uncommon activity,

and from being the most desirable harbor of the entire coast, the government fleets were ordered to rendezvous at this point, and as they had nearly all preceded us, they were lying at anchor awaiting appearance of the flag ship, on whose deck was stationed the Lord High Admiral of the entire naval forces. And what a grand, exciting scene was brought to view as the "Admiratic" forged to the front, banners and bunting of every conceivable shape and size waved from every masthead and spar, and now the order signalled to cast anchor, the great guns belched forth welcome to the admiral, while cheers and hurrahs went up from the throats of thousands of the enthusiastic soldiery, while transports by the thousands, laden with military stores and field artillery, decks crowded with marines, horses of magnificent build richly caparisoned, were there by the hundreds of thousands.

The batteries pealed forth in tones of defiance to the foe, and adieu to friends at home, the loud sounding notes scarcely dying away when they were echoed by some distant battery, in exchange of compliment, the music of a hundred organizations, all lending additional charm to scenes where the heart is made glad. At the same time deep-seated melancholy pervades the entire assemblage, for many there were, who, despite the fascinations of warfare, were in doubt as to whether they would ever return to again look on the magnificent features of the capital city, for each knew that death would ere long stare him in the face.

Here were promulgated the orders of engagement, I, Josiah Bartholemew, commissioned

“Charge-de-Affairs” of the reportorial force, with orders to communicate with the chief of staff only.

The several divisions of the fleet now take their respective stations, the line of battle extending in either direction farther than the eye could reach, were signalled to start at a moment’s notice. The flag ship assigned to the center of the line. And now the order is given to hoist sail, standing out to sea, so it is but a little time when every sail is spread to the breeze, and the fleet is slowly but surely wafted onward to scenes where angels might weep and devils rejoice.

Thus the fleet advances, a thunderous report now and then signalling some lagging division to hurry up in line, until at length we arrive within some fifty leagues of the hostile shores. Now a halt is signalled, the fleet deploy in battle array, then move up twenty-five miles distant from the enemy’s works. The right of the column cast anchor, preparing for bombardment of the extensive fortifications, which, though so far away, are within easy range, and, consequent on the enlarged rotundity of the immense globe, are plainly to be seen. Meanwhile the center and left move to either side, so that while one division is engaged at the front, the others execute flank movements, thus landing troops both above and below, who at the last unite at the enemy’s rear, and as the fortified positions extend in an unbroken line for at least fifty miles, it must necessarily consume considerable time in arriving at the respective points where the land forces are to disembark; therefore, it will be readily seen there would be ample time for the attacking force at the front to make headway—if

it could be done at all—before those in the rear could be brought into action. Moreover, it was a matter of conjecture as to whether, with the forces co-operating, the attack would eventuate in success, particularly when taking into account the numerical strength of the revolutionists being nearly equal to that of the nationals. However, by the arranged flank movement, it was believed they could be taken unawares, but here was where a mistake was made. The alertness, decision, and, above all, firmness of the opposition was soon made manifest by the concentrated fire on the center of the fleet, a number of heavy balls passing directly over the flag ship and vessels along the front rank, but causing sad havoc to those in the rear, for a full score were almost annihilated.

Upon witnessing this manifestation of the enemy's fearful power, the face of the admiral seemed to wear a troubled look, and well might such be the case, for if the guns of a single battery were competent to inflict such an amount of damage, what would be the effect of a score of batteries? Certainly, a problem of easy solution. However, in no wise undaunted, the admiral directs return fire from the entire front line of battle, answered by a thousand guns. When the dense volumes of smoke having cleared away, revealed a sight, causing every marine and cannonier to send up a shout of joy, for the ponderous walls of the distant fortifications were to be seen falling, in many places not one stone left upon another.

CHAPTER LII.

IN CLOSE QUARTERS.

THE battle well on was raging with the utmost intensity, the result, however, as yet hard to determine, heavy masses of dark, threatening clouds and stifling smoke rising as a wall in our front, so that it was a sheer matter of impossibility to estimate the damage inflicted on the enemy's works. The fearful din at the rear betokened a desperate struggle, hence it would seem the land contingent were meeting an unexpected opposition, so reinforcements were called for, whereupon a detachment from the main body, computed at a half million of the flower of the army, were landed and immediately pushed to the front.

Forging ahead with terrific speed, impelled by scores of aeronautic steeds, were to be seen long columns of flying machines in active preparation to hurl on the enemy's heads thunderbolts, in the form of heavily loaded shells which must, from the very nature of the deadly missiles, cause a retreat unless some counteracting influence could be brought to bear, which, under the circumstances, was not possible; so it was not long before the shells began dropping, followed by results of a terribly sanguinary nature.

"Twas thus the battle raged with scarcely a mo-

ment's cessation, attended by fearful loss of life, for the space of eight and forty hours. At the end of which time the enemy, finding all lost, withdrew to their former anchorage.

It was now quite evident that the enemy's affairs were in a condition bordering on desperation.

The conflict resulting in the complete triumph of the national cause.

Well, to make a long story short, as my old friend, Captain Jeremy Lighthouse would say, consequent on the skill displayed in performance of my reportorial duties, I, Josiah Bartholemew, was likewise raised to lofty position, that is, charged with the duties pertaining to "News Gatherer in Chief," my field of operations the entire hemisphere.

The insurgent element crushed, the prospect of again rallying for the prosecution of the cause was slim indeed, so by proclamation of the government it was understood that, should secession again be attempted, the authors and abettors thereof would suffer the full penalty of the law.

CHAPTER LIII.

A VISIT TO GENEVRA.

GOVERNMENTAL affairs adjusted, and nothing in particular demanding attention, I petitioned for, and was granted leave of absence, for I was to pay my Genevra a visit at her own home in the populous city of Acropolis, but not knowing the sort of reception I would be likely to meet—especially from the paternal side of the house—who, consequent on his exalted position, might not be inclined to favor my suit. The maternal opinion I cared less about, on the principle that, as were the daughter's affections bent, so would the mother's be inclined. Yet, taking it all in all, my mind was assailed with unpleasant forebodings, until the adage was brought to mind, "Faint heart never won fair lady." I resolved to set out with the least possible delay. Meanwhile engaged in preparing for the ten thousand mile journey, I take occasion to call on Jubal, who informed me that, "commissioned as bearer of dispatches to a number of outlying planets, among which is that of earth, I hereby invite you to accompany me."

Informing worthy Jubal of the proposed visit he gave assent with the proviso that I take sufficient time to accomplish the desired object, as nothing detrimental was likely to ensue from limited post-

ponement of the prospective voyage to other planets, so assuring my kind hearted mentor that under no ordinary circumstances would my stay be unduly prolonged, I went on board the aeronautic ship "Whirlwind," and before I had time to make acquaintance with any of the passengers I was set down at Acropolis station, where on solicitation, the master directed me to the abode of the noted astrologer, Nicophorous, the paternal ancestor of my beloved Geneva.

The home of Nicophorous I found to be palatial in the extreme, likewise situated on an eminence overlooking the city.

Going aboard a rapid transit car I was in a few moments landed at the entrance gate of a long stretch of parkway grounds in winding walks laid on variegated marbles, bordered with lofty trees, while from innumerable fountains flowed waters sparkling in the broad sunlight, in fact, everything about seemed on a scale of magnificence heretofore unknown, hence I was on the point of enquiring if there were no streets, rather paths golden paved, for such was the description I had heard given of Paradise. But what struck me more forcibly than all else was a chariot drawn with three horses abreast, reins in the hand of a charioteer of noble bearing, the entire outfit of a grandeur unapproachable. While reclining under a crimson canopy, was a maiden whom I at once recognized as the one for whom I had taken the long journey—Genevra.

Swiftly approaching, the chariot comes to a standstill. The lovely occupant stretches out a hand accompanied with the exclamation, "Good

friend, if such, on short acquaintance I am permitted to address thee, it is certainly with much joy I am constrained to thus greet thee, for I much feared I might never again behold thy pleasant face, but thanks to the good angels who never desert a friend in need, thou hast it seems escaped the dangers incident to thy hazardous calling. Moreover, the fame acquired in fulfillment of thy mission hath for a verity traveled faster than thou, hence, forewarned of thy coming I have made preparations as you see."

Kindly,—I might say condescendingly—a seat was proffered at her side. The charioteer gave the rein to his steeds and away we went. The palace gates opening to receive us before I was hardly aware we had started, disclosing a magnificent hall-way where we were accosted by a gorgeously attired footman and waited on to an apartment designated as the "Audience Chamber," Genevra soon after retiring to her own room.

A few moments devoted to examining the various articles scattered promiscuously about, and the noted astrologer accompanied by his wife appeared, escorted by the footman, who likewise performed the ceremony of introduction.

Approaching, Nicophorous gave me a hand, saying: "Stranger from another world,—as I have been credibly informed—thy name and fame hath so far outstripped thy journeyings as to become known through the length and breadth of the land, therefore accept greetings from one who delights to honor talent, come from whatsoever source it may," then in hesitating mood, "permit me, good sir, to give thee introduction to one who deserves an equal

share of honor with thyself.—Mrs. Nicophorous.”

Upon taking the hand of this remarkable gentleman, I could entertain no doubt as to Genevra’s parentage, for in bearing and general appearance one was a counterpart of the other, the expressive features of the father descending to the daughter.

As in any event my stay must be limited, I inform the worthy pair relative to the contemplated journey to other planets, whereupon both break out in rapturous applause, mingled with congratulations in that I was favored above all spirits in being permitted to revisit olden time scenes, and above all renew acquaintances with olden time friends.

I have no desire to trespass on the time or weary the reader’s patience by relating the varied scenes and incidents connected with my stay, and will only add that my visit was delightful beyond anticipation, terminating altogether beyond my most sanguine hopes, for before taking leave I was, with the consent of her parents, engaged in marriage to the lovely Genevra, the consummation of the auspicious event to remain in embryo until my return from “foreign parts.” So bidding my kind friends “adieu,” I returned home by rail.

Upon reaching the capital city I found Jubal actively at work preparing for the journey, estimated at more than ten thousand million of miles, my main source of regret lying in the fact that I was compelled to take leave of my affianced, while her principal cause of anxiety arose from the notion that I might peradventure come across my former wife—Hab-a-sha—who will be remembered as connected with my kingly exploits, but, on as-

surance that this was certainly among the list of impossibilities because all of five centuries had elapsed since my demise in rear of Pickett's columns on the noteworthy field of Gettysburg, it could hardly be expected that her spirit would still be hovering about earth, or in any way connected with earthly affairs. In this, however, I was—as the sequel will show,—fearfully deceived.

Having received the aforesaid dispatches, thus all in readiness for the prospectively long journey, Jubal and I bade leave of our spirit friends,—from many receiving congratulations, others venting their spite, because we should be so favored, in contradistinction to themselves—then set out with bright anticipations as to what the future might have in store. Thus planet after planet was visited, our stay at each of limited duration, but not one was called upon that we were not received with due consideration, as bearing messages from the great central orb to those of lesser degree, and now came the welcome news—as reported by Jubal in the words,—“Josiah, we are rapidly nearing earth's solar system, for look you, yonder is the sun, though but a mere speck in the heavens.” We were, however, traveling with such inconceivable rapidity that before we were really conscious of the fact an immense globe of liquid fires, glowing in their wondrous intensity, rose in our front, and in such close proximity that we were nearly overcome with the furious heat. Anon, the moon in majestic splendor rises, her soft yellow rays illuminating the heavens, lighting up mountain caverns and darksome recesses, while seas, oceans and vast plains of earth's dominions were plainly visible, so that it was but

a little while after, that landing was made, and we once more standing on familiar ground, but oh, how changed, what wondrous alterations five centuries have wrought! London-town, the oncewhile world's emporium, center of a world's commerce, where converged all greatest and best that human skill was competent to produce, now—as once before prefigured by Jubal—a desert waste, the British isles given up to the “beast that prowls by night, and the pestilence that walketh by noonday.” The temples where flourished the arts and sciences, lofty structures, consecrated to worship, warehouses, overflowing with a world's products, railways spanning continents, houses for the poor and destitute, all these, aye, and more, things of a long forgotten past, while rivers on whose bosom floated a world's marine, ships destined to every known port, all now among the things that were, but are not.

Crossing the vast expanse of ocean, my surprise was even greater, for I found the western hemisphere filled with towns and cities, many having overtaken and passed even the once great city of London.

I had hardly anticipated meeting my olden time war associates—or for that matter, any one of them, the passage of time presumably having raised them to loftier planes in the spirit world—but in this I was mistaken, inasmuch as I found many s'll earthbound, thus evidently not in the line of progression. And now, lest I be accused of uttering falsehoods, I will mention one circumstance that I feared might have a possible bearing on my future spirit life, it coming about in this way, to wit:

At a reception given in my honor, held at the residence of a member of a certain spiritualist association, at this time the religion of earth, the fact was, through a medium, having communication with the world of spirits, disclosed that the fears of Genevra were not without foundation, for here I learned that my former earth wife—Chief Tanawarga's daughter—was still a dweller of the mundane sphere, and what was more, would, if I so wished, appear to me in spirit guise, thus renewing acquaintance of five long centuries ago.

Now, under ordinary conditions, nothing would have pleased me better than to meet one whom it had been my good fortune to rescue from the toils of her enemies, and to whom I was at the time devotedly attached, but now, that the fears of my anticipated bride, Genevra, were in fair way of realization, I was certainly in an unpleasant position, for to refuse audience with one who on all occasions had striven for the promotion of my happiness, and from whom in tears I had parted five hundred years since, was a thought not easily borne, yet, in whose interests was it my duty to serve? She, from whom by the most imperative of nature's laws I had for so long been divorced or the one to whom I had so lately sworn fealty? Clearly the latter. Anyway, 'twas thus I argued, but that supreme selfishness was at the bottom I could not deny.

I regretfully pass by description of our return to celestial regions, with the simple remark, "That on arrival we were received as was evidently befitting the king's messengers to other worlds, Jubal the recipient of numerous testimonials, evidencing the

faithful performance of his arduous duties, accompanied by accurate report furnished to leading journals of the capital city, one, 'The Daily News,' testifying to the fact that Josiah Bartholemew was the one reporter who could be relied upon for accuracy of statement combined with surprising facility for gathering the most stirring news afloat, hence it would naturally stand the government officials in hand to make satisfactory arrangements whereby the talented reporter's services can be secured, else offers may be tendered in other quarters equally conducive to his own interests, if less satisfactory to the government." "For what," urges one of the leading journals, "is a hundred dollars more or less when important interests are to be subserved? Nothing, we say; therefore we urge the authorities to make haste in securing the services of our friend and noteworthy correspondent, lately returned from a journey to outlying planets—Josiah Bartholemew."

THE END.





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